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OBSERVATIONS
ON
SOUTHEY'S "LIFE OF WESLEY;"
BEING
A DEFENCE
OF
THE CHARACTER, LABOURS, AND OPINIONS,
OF
MR. WESLEY,

Against the Misrepresentations of that Publication.

BY RICHARD WATSON.

"Nec semper feriet quodcunque minabitur arcus."—HOR.

SECOND EDITION.

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OBSERVATIONS,

&c.

METHODISM has been generally assailed by a violence so blind and illiberal, that the writers who have chosen to distinguish themselves by their zeal against that religious body, have, in most cases, so sufficiently answered themselves, that controversy has been rendered unnecessary. A few, and only a few, defences of the conduct and opinions of Mr. Wesley and his followers, have therefore been published. The time of those best qualified for such services has been better employed in works of active piety and benevolence. They have held on their way "*through good report and evil report*," thinking it enough, that, by the writings of their Founder, and other subsequent publications, the candid might acquaint themselves with their views of Christianity; and that a people spread throughout the land presented points of observation sufficiently numerous to enable unprejudiced persons to form an accurate estimate of their character and influence.

Mr. SOUTHEY's Life of the venerable Founder of Methodism presents itself under another aspect.

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It is not a hasty production, and it betrays no want of temper. The facts and incidents which make up the life and history of the remarkable man, of whom he has somewhat strangely become the Biographer, have been collected with diligence ; and the narrative is creditable to his literary character. He has the higher praise of considerable candour—candour, exercised on subjects which presented temptations to more frequent sarcasm and censure, had he aimed at gratifying the prejudices and feelings of a great number of his readers ; and he has ventured to say more in praise of the character and public usefulness of Mr. Wesley, than will be found in most publications of the kind, not emanating from persons connected with the Wesleyan Society. Notwithstanding this general candour, and, as I believe, intended impartiality, there are still great objections to the Book. The Wesley of Mr. Southey is not in several of its most important characteristics, Mr. Wesley himself ; and the picture of Methodism which he has drawn is not just, either in tone or composition. The impression made by the whole is indeed equally as unfavourable to Christianity itself, as to the views of that particular society, through which some of its vital principles are assaulted ; and it is as Christians, quite as much as a religious body, that the Methodists are dissatisfied with it. By them panegyric was not wished, and there is more of justice and fairness than was hoped, considering the quarter from which the work was to proceed. What is defective and perverted may be charitably imputed, less to the intention of the writer, than to his total want of qualifications for

the undertaking. The Life of Wesley was not a subject for the pen of Southey: and for want of an “enlightened understanding,” both Christianity and some of its brightest ornaments have received but partial justice at his hands.

Had the Biographer been either less or more acquainted with theological subjects, his work would have borne a character more decided. It would have been better or worse; and, in either form, more acceptable to all parties. It would have done more good, or less mischief. As it is, it has a singularly hybridous character. It is distorted with inconsistencies, and propositions which neutralize each other as to any good effect, and yet retain activity enough to do injury. Religion itself, whatever Mr. Wesley's views might be, if the Church of England has rightly exhibited it in her formularies, and in the writings of her greatest divines, is very incautiously and generally resolved into enthusiasm, and other natural causes; and every stirring of the feelings which may appear new and irregular to a cold and torpid formality, has a ready designation in the equally undefined term fanaticism. There are, it is true, occasional admissions on these subjects, which indicate respect and veneration for what is sacred; but they seem often to be used only as a convenient medium through which to convey impressions of a contrary kind with greater force. That this was not always intended, will be cheerfully admitted; but if any thing, more than experience has already furnished, were necessary to show the mischievousness of writing on subjects of religion, without steady and

digested principles, it would be supplied by this publication. On all such topics Mr. Southey is extremely flippant and assuming, without any qualification to support his pretensions. Educated, as it is reported, in the Socinian school, and afterwards allured farther from the truth by the glare of a still more delusive philosophy, he has corrected many of his former errors, and is now professedly an orthodox member of the Church of England. I am happy to see him in that fold. It would be illiberal to remember the aberrations of his youth, and not to allow him the praise of having for several years employed his talents well and usefully. His is, evidently, an amiable and elevated, as well as a highly cultivated mind; but his views are yet too dim, and his theological attainments far too scanty, to give him a right to all that authority which he claims on many of those vital and solemn subjects which he decides with so censurable a confidence.

It is much to be regretted that no general principles appear to have been laid down by Mr. Southey, to guide him in his estimate of Mr. Wesley's conduct and character. He is constantly vacillating between the philosopher and the Christian; but, unhappily, the tendency to philosophize most frequently predominates. The *natural causes* of every movement of the soul, and of every singularity in the conduct of Mr. Wesley and his followers, are eagerly sought, and abundantly laboured out. Devotional ardour is resolved into constitutional temperament; religious joys and depressions into buoyancy of the spirits, and the influence of disease; Mr. Wesley's selection of the means of usefulness

into the blind impulse of surrounding circumstances; his active zeal into ambition; the great effects of his preaching into his eloquence, and the opportune occurrence of a new contagious disease; his enterprize into a consciousness of his own powers; and his want of clerical regularity into his natural unsubmissiveness of mind. Some of these points shall be examined in the sequel; but this mode of determining such questions savours too much of the school from which we trust Mr. Southey is on many great points happily rescued; and it implies too great a concession to the infidel and superficial philosophy of the day, of the evil tendency of which, when otherwise applied, he has a deep conviction. He has resorted to weapons which may as easily be wielded against Christianity as against Methodism; and against every distinguished character in the annals of the Church of Christ, as against Mr. Wesley.

Is Mr. Southey a believer in Christianity? If so, waiving for the present a minuter consideration of the following points, he must believe in the providential designation of distinguished characters to produce great and beneficial effects upon society;—he must believe in the influence of the Holy Spirit upon the minds of men, exciting them to their duty, and assisting them in it; he must believe that to renew a corrupt heart, and to give real effect to the Christian ministry, is the work of God, though carried on by human agents. He is not a Christian if he believes not these doctrines; he is not a Churchman; his Christianity is a name, a pretence; and if, in reality, he admits them, they

were unhappily often absent from his mind, or frequently confused by the lingering traces of former erring sentiments, when he applied himself to determine the questions which presented themselves in the course of his late researches into Methodism.

Another cause of the wavering and erring judgment which he forms of Mr. Wesley, though far less blameable, is, that when he assumes something of the character of a Christian in the view of a case, it is not so much of a Christian generally, as of a zealous advocate of the order and discipline of the Church of England. I do not blame this rule in every instance, but it is objectionable as a primary one. The religious character and motives of Mr. Wesley are in question; but surely the order and rule of any Church, however excellent, are not the standard by which either can be determined. That standard is to be found in the principles of our common Christianity. The order of a Church may have been violated by an irregularity which it does not allow. The fault may have been, that Mr. Wesley's zeal was too expansive, or that the rule which his zeal violated was too contracted; these are other considerations, and are not surely to influence the judgment as to general character and motive. His Christianity must be tried by other laws, and can only be determined by the Bible itself. Modern times cannot exhibit a character in which all the great, and all the graceful virtues of Christianity were more fully embodied, and, through a long life, more amply realized, than in the Founder of Methodism. They have not presented a more laborious, a more successful minister of Christ. On what

principle then is he ceaselessly charged with ambition, and the love of power, as the leading, though sometimes the unconscious motives of his actions? Why does Mr. Southey delight to rake into the corruption of our general nature, to stain the lustre and dissipate the fragrance of the eminent virtues of this distinguished man, as though those virtues must necessarily have struck root into that corruption as their soil, and have drawn from them a sickly exuberance, and a deleterious and earthly odour? Where virtues so eminent were sustained by evidence so palpable, why has Mr. Southey, in so many instances, suffered himself to be seduced by a paltry philosophy which resolves all virtue into selfishness, or more properly into vice itself; and in others determined motives by a rule drawn from party predilections, to the neglect of those more favourable decisions which the general Christian rule would have supplied? Mr. Southey may say, that the faults charged are infirmities, from which the best of men are not exempt. But ambition, taken in the generally received sense, as Mr. Southey uses the term, is not an infirmity. It is a vice, utterly incompatible with the spirit and temper of a real Christian: and, if he did not intend very greatly to lower Mr. Wesley's character by the charge, as indeed it seems but fair to acknowledge, this only proves that Mr. Southey has very low, and inadequate notions of real Christianity itself.—He either trifles with Mr. Wesley's character, or with religion.

Southey's Life of Wesley is not a mere narrative of the incidents which occurred in the career of the

individual, and of the rise, progress, and opinions of the religious body of which he was the Founder. The author passes judgment on every thing as it occurs ; and, not unfrequently, so marshals his facts as to give the greater plausibility to his censures. We acknowledge that the opinions of Biographers and Historians, who are supposed to be calm and unprejudiced observers of persons and events, respecting which sufficient time has elapsed to allow a judgment to be formed, unbiassed by partial impressions, often form the most instructive part both of Biography and History. We read works of this kind not merely for the facts they contain, but for the sake of the opinions of those who profess to have studied their subject ; and willingly put ourselves under the direction of a guiding mind for the discovery of those lessons which Providence designed to teach mankind, by the occasional introduction of great and singular characters, and the permission of important actions, upon the stage of our world. Unless, however, we have taken the resolution of submitting our judgments implicitly to every writer who undertakes to think for the public, we naturally enquire into the competency of an author for so high an office. To this enquiry Mr. Southey must be subjected.

The question, however, is not whether he had habits sufficiently diligent to collect the facts necessary for fairly exhibiting the character of Mr. Wesley and of Methodism ; nor whether he had the ability to work them into clear and spirited narrative. Neither will be denied ; but these are minor considerations. He has not contented himself with nar-

rative ; he has added “ reflections to his tale,” and both as a theologian, and an advocate of the National Church, he has assumed the critic and the censor. His qualifications under these characters must, therefore, be put to the test.

§ 1. Mr. Southey's Theological Qualifications.

The leading points on which Mr. Southey, as the Biographer of Mr. Wesley, was called to express a judgment were, his religious character; his doctrines; his labours as a minister; and their results. All these evidently involve theological principles, and with them Mr. Southey's mind is but slenderly furnished. Of this, the account he has given of Mr. Wesley's conversion is a pregnant example.

It would be difficult to fix upon a more interesting and instructive moral spectacle than that which is presented in the progress of the mind of the Founder of Methodism, through all its deep and serious agitations, doubts, difficulties, hopes, and fears, from his earliest religious awakenings, to the moment when he found that steadfast peace which never afterwards forsook him, but gave serenity to his countenance, and cheerfulness to his heart, to the last moment of a prolonged life. Even in Mr. Southey's caricatured representation, and in despite of the frequent recurrence of flippant, and fatuous observations, it has an awe which frowns down ridicule, or kindles indignation at such an intrusion on scenes so hallowed. The heart is not to be envied, whatever affectation of philosophy there may be,

which can suffer itself to be so far misled by those minor circumstances of the case, which, by forgetting times and circumstances, may appear somewhat singular and extravagant, as to overlook those great considerations which force themselves upon all but the lightest minds, when the history of a mind so impressed and influenced, is candidly and honestly laid open. His were inward conflicts which many besides have felt, but which are seldom brought forth from the recesses of the bosoms they have so variously agitated. Yet they are not cases of merely individual concern. We all have errors to be dissipated, a natural corruption to be overcome, a peace to make with God, a relation to an eternal world to render sure or hopeful. The careless may smile at accounts of Conversion ; but the serious mind which, in the wilderness of its thoughts, eagerly looks out for a guiding hand and a directive star, cannot be uninterested in them. Others are seen, in the early stages of their religious experience, in the same bewildered paths as ourselves, and the process of their deliverance points out that desired track which may lead us also into the light and peace for which we seek. To the rule of the Holy Scriptures such accounts of individual conversion are to be carefully subordinated; but they are often instructive and invaluable comments upon them, because they are the realizations of its moral theory.

Mr. Wesley has made the full disclosure, and it is the only true key to his theological system, and to his public conduct. His conversion is given in sufficient detail by Mr. Southey, though evidently above his comprehension. Impressed in his youth with a reli-

gious concern, he resorted to books and to men for an answer to a question which, in spite of trifling, will at some time or other intrude itself upon every human heart—"What shall I do to be saved?" Happy if it were treated as seriously by all! He needed nothing, and yet was not happy. He had no quarrel with the world, and yet the world could not satisfy him. He stood in awe of God, convinced that he was living in a state of guilt and danger; he was afraid of death, because he had no lively hope of happiness beyond it. He redoubled his attention to the services of the Church—he read the Scriptures and the Fathers—he adopted the fasts and mortifications of former times—he resorted to every book of credit on practical and spiritual religion—in the eagerness and honesty of his enquiries, he walked many miles on foot to converse with a man reputed eminently religious—he abounded in works of zeal and charity—yet after all he was not at peace. Whilst others thought him righteous overmuch, he was daily discovering new defects in his services, and becoming better acquainted with his heart; he felt even an increased fear of death; and he was not delivered from the dominion of inward corruption, though his life was unblameable. He had early resorted to the Calvinistic divines, and though in some of their writings he might have found those very views of faith which afterwards administered to his deliverance and comfort, they were mixed up with a system, at which he revolted, and afterwards strenuously opposed, though on other and better grounds than he at that time assumed. This repulsion of mind threw him more fully under the

influence of the writings of Taylor, Kempis, and Law, which, however excellent, afforded him little help in the point most concerning to him, his justification before God ; for though admirably adapted to mature and perfect religion in the heart and life, they are greatly defective in those views of faith, and the atonement, which alone can give peace to a penitent and troubled spirit. The mystic writers were next resorted to, but these only increased his “ perplexities and entanglements.” His sincere zeal led him to Georgia. On his passage he met with some pious Moravians, and, impressed by their simplicity and devotedness, he maintained an affectionate intercourse with them all the time he remained in America ; and from their conversation, different views of himself, and of the means by which man is justified before his God, broke upon his mind. A mind so sincere in its search for truth, though long exposed to trial, could not be forsaken. The result of that over-ruling Providence which led him to make acquaintance with these excellent men, shall be given in his own words.

“ It is now two years and almost four months since I left my native country, in order to teach the Georgian Indians the nature of Christianity. But what have I learnt myself meantime ? Why,—what I the least of all suspected,—that I, who went to Ameriea to convert others, was never myself converted to God. *I am not mad*, though I thus speak, but *I speak the words of truth and soberness* ; if haply some of those who still dream may awake, and see that as I am, so are they. Are they read in philosophy ? So was I. In ancient or modern

tongues? So was I also. Are they versed in the science of divinity? I too have studied it many years. Can they talk fluently upon spiritual things? The very same could I do. Are they plenteous in alms? Behold, I gave 'all my goods to feed the poor.' Do they give of their labour as well as their substance? I have laboured more abundantly. Are they willing to suffer for their brethren? I have thrown up my friends, reputation, ease, country. I have put my life in my hand, wandering into strange lands; I have given my body to be devoured by the deep, parched up with heat, consumed by toil and weariness, or whatsoever God shall please to bring upon me. But does all this (be it more or less, it matters not,) make me acceptable to God? Does all I ever did, or can, *know, say, give, do, or suffer*, justify me in his sight? If the oracles of God are true, if we are still to abide by the *Law and Testimony*, all these things, though when ennobled by faith in Christ they are holy, and just, and good, yet without, are *dung* and *dross*. Thus then have I learned, in the ends of the earth, that my whole heart is altogether corrupt and abominable, and consequently my whole life:—that my own works, my own sufferings, my own righteousness, are so far from reconciling me to an offended God, so far from making an atonement for the least of those sins, which are more in number than the hairs of my head, that the most specious of them need an atonement themselves:—that having the sentence of death in my heart, and nothing in or of myself to plead, I have no hope but that of being justified freely through the redemption that is in Jesus,—but

that if I seek I shall find Christ, and be found in him. If it be said, that I have faith, (for many such things have I heard from many miserable comforters,) I answer, so have the devils,—*a sort* of faith; but still they are strangers to the covenant of promise. The faith I want is a sure trust and confidence in God, that through the merits of Christ my sins are forgiven, and I reconciled to the favour of God. I want that faith which no one can have without knowing that he hath it, (though many imagine they have it, who have it not); for whosoever hath it is *freed from sin*; *the whole body of sin is destroyed* in him; he is freed from fear, *having peace with God through Christ, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God.* And he is freed from doubt, having the love of God shed abroad in his heart, through the Holy Ghost which is given unto him, which ‘Spirit itself beareth witness with his spirit,’ that he is a child of God.”

This faith he sought and found, with its fruits, dominion over sin, and peace, and joy; and from that moment, till he ended his career of shame and glory, he preached it to others, with the confidence of one who had “the witness in himself,” and with a fulness of sympathy for all who wandered in paths of darkness and distress, which could not but be inspired by the recollection of his own former anxieties.

This account, with the circumstances connected with it, occupies many pages in Mr. Southey’s narrative; and the clear and ample manner in which it is presented, may possibly lead many persons to a much better conclusion than he himself, judging

from his interspersed remarks, appears to have drawn from it. I have introduced it here, because it will enable the reader to judge of Mr. Southey's views of religion. The following theological points are included in this account of Mr. Wesley's conversion. 1st, That the human heart is wholly corrupt, and the practice sinful, until a moral change is wrought in them by the power of God. This was the ground of Mr. Wesley's inward disquiet, and the reason of his earnest prayers, and efforts. 2d, That the sins of men expose them to the wrath of God, though there be no marked irregularity in their conduct; and that the Divine wrath can only be avoided by forgiveness. This was the ground of his apprehensions, and fears of death, as being conscious of sin, and unassured of pardon. 3d, That no works of righteousness performed, or of mortification endured, are grounds of dependance for pardon, because they are not reasons on which we can urge that act of grace. They are fruits meet for repentance; the necessary results of penitence, sincerity, and of that faith which, relying on the threatenings of the Divine law, alarms the conscience, and connects the apprehension of punishment with sin, but they are nothing more. It was by depending on these acts as the means of reconciliation with God, without a direct and exclusive exercise of faith in the Divine atonement made for the sins of men, which produced so much effort on his part, and so little success in obtaining support for his agitated mind. 4th, That such a faith exercised by one who, having the sentence of condemnation in his heart, and having nothing in or of himself to plead, having no hope

but that of being justified freely through the *redemption that is in Jesus*, is the faith which is imputed to him for righteousness, and upon its exercise he receives the forgiveness of sins, and an assurance of God's favour, through the Holy Spirit, and is then at peace with God, and with himself.

It is thus that Mr. Wesley's personal experience connects itself with several great points of theological doctrine; but Mr. Southey has never enquired whether they are true or false. If he thinks them only substantially true, the manner in which he has treated Mr. Wesley's early history is unworthy a serious and religious man: if he think them false, then the colouring which he has thrown over this part of Mr. Wesley's life is in character. It has in it all the guile, though not the usual grossness of infidelity. The truth appears to be, that Mr. Southey gave himself not the least concern to ascertain whether these principles were true or false. For Christianity he is now an advocate, and for the Church of England too; but under either character he ought to have known that the doctrines which Mr. Wesley's conversion implies, are the doctrines of both. The first point respects the corruption of human nature, and he will perhaps ask here, as in another part of his work, "Where Wesley obtained his notions on the subject?" The answer is, that as a Christian he obtained them from him who said, "They that are in the flesh (they in whom a regenerating change has not taken place,) cannot please God;" and, as a better instructed Churchman than Mr. Southey, from the Article which declares, "that man of his own nature is inclined to evil, and

that continually." Mr. Wesley found himself under guilt, and had alarms as to his state after death. All this may be resolved into an "ascetic disposition" and "nervous affection;" but it is surely a momentous enquiry which every man ought to make, whether, whilst unregenerated and unpardoned, he has any just hope of a future felicity. If Mr. Southey will study the excellent doctrine of the Church of which he now professes to be a member, he will not find the subject treated in so light a manner. He will be taught not only "to acknowledge," but to "*bewail*, his manifold sins," and that they have "most justly provoked the Divine *wrath* and *indignation*" against him. He may think the doctrine of justification by faith fanatical, yet it was not until Mr. Wesley's acquaintance with the Moravians that he came fully to understand the views taken of this subject by the very Church of which he was a clergyman; and his mind was never so fully imbued with the letter and spirit of the article in which she has so truly interpreted St. Paul, as when he learned from Peter Boliler, almost in the words of the article itself, that "we are justified by faith only," and that this is a most "wholesome doctrine." As to the doctrine of assurance, on which Mr. Southey has bestowed so many philosophic solutions, I shall remark in another place; but for the change in Mr. Wesley's feelings after he became acquainted with the doctrine of "justification by faith only," he might have found a better reason had he either consulted St. Paul, who says "we joy in God by whom we have received the reconciliation," or his own Church, which has emphatically declared

that doctrine, not only to be very wholesome, but also "*very full of comfort.*"

All the great principles implied in the account of Mr. Wesley's inquiries and impressions, until, what he believed to be, his conversion from a nominal or defective, to a real Christianity, are then to be found, not only in the Scriptures, but in the formularies of that Church which, as Mr. Southey believes, rightly interprets their meaning. It may be added, that they are also found in the writings of the most distinguished divines of every orthodox Church, and in every age. Let us then examine, how he has treated this interesting and eventful period of Mr. Wesley's life.

The whole of those religious feelings to which we have adverted, whether of sorrow or of joy, fear or confidence, are resolved into constitutional habit, and enthusiasm. In entering on the subject, he observes, —“He,” Mr. Wesley, “applied himself to theological studies: his devotional feelings thus fostered, soon acquired the predominance in *a frame of mind like his.*” The meaning of this is, that there was in Mr. Wesley's mind a constitutional adaptation to strong and singular devotional habits, and that circumstances only being wanting to bring the principle into action, the study of theology occurred as the exciting cause. If this passage should be thought in itself equivocal, the import of it is sufficiently explained in other parts of the work, which abounds in an offensive, and more than semi-infidel manner of thinking and speaking on these sacred subjects. “Voltaire,” we are told, “laboured in the cause of immorality and unbelief;” Wesley, in that of “reli-

gious enthusiasm." "Law is a powerful writer ; it is said that few books have ever made so many *religious enthusiasts* as his Christian Perfection, and his Serious Call." On Mr. Wesley's way from America to England, with a firmer conviction of his sinfulness and guilt than when he left his native country ; and now taught, that by faith alone he could obtain remission of sins, he was oppressed with the fear of death, and made the following observations on the state of his mind, which Mr. Southey has quoted from his Journal.

" Let us observe hereon : 1. That not one of those hours ought to pass out of my remembrance till I attain another manner of spirit, a spirit equally willing to glorify God, by life or by death. 2. That whoever is uneasy on any account, (bodily pain alone excepted,) carries in himself, his own conviction that he is so far an unbeliever. Is he uneasy at the apprehension of death ? Then he believeth not that *to die is gain*. At any of the events of life ? Then he hath not a firm belief that *all things work together for his good*. And if he bring the matter more close, he will always find, besides the general want of faith, every particular uneasiness is evidently owing to the want of some particular temper."

Mr. Southey thinks there was no reason for these fears, and that Mr. Wesley's feelings might have been accounted for by referring to "*the state of his pulse or stomach*." It does not appear that either were disordered ; and if they had, the solution can only prove satisfactory to those, who either neglect to take the doctrines of Scripture into their consideration, or wilfully reject them. Is it surprising, that

a person on a sea voyage should be impressed with his liability to danger; and is it not most natural, if any belief in God, and his own relations to an eternal world, exist in his mind; if he is any thing more than a trifler in the concerns of his salvation, that he should seriously examine his degree of preparation for an event, which no wise man will treat with indifference? If the force of Mr. Wesley's reasoning on the fear of death, in the passage just quoted, has escaped Mr. Southey, it is because he has not so carefully studied the New Testament as literature of another kind. He would otherwise have learned, that one of the great ends of the coming of Christ was, to "deliver them who had been all their life-time subject to bondage through the fear of death;" and that an oppressive and gloomy apprehension of our last hour is utterly inconsistent with a true and lively faith in Him, who is "the resurrection and the life."

Mr. Wesley, however, had discovered the possibility of this great deliverance; and for such a faith as might bring to his mind the assurance of the favour of God, at all times, and in all circumstances, he most earnestly and constantly prayed. What he sought he found; but Mr. Southey's dexterity never fails him, and he can as easily detect the fallacy of his joys as of his sorrows, of his faith as of his fear. The account of Mr. Wesley's conversion is cited from his journal.

"I felt I did trust in Christ alone for salvation, and an assurance was given me, that he had taken away all *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved me from the law of sin and death. But it was not long before

the enemy suggested, This cannot be faith," &c. On this Mr. Southey remarks, " How many a thought arising from instinctive logic, which is grounded on common sense, has been fathered upon the personified principle of evil!" This is sufficiently indicative of Mr. Southey's religious system. We are in fact told that this change from doubt to confidence, and from disquiet to peace, was, in the whole process, a delusion, carried on in opposition to common sense; which, however, would occasionally revolt, and throw in its counter plea, of " instinctive logic." But the *ci devant* Socinian is suffered to come forth here without a veil. Mr. Wesley referred his subsequent visitation of doubt " to the enemy ;" but there is no such being; and what we call his temptations, arise from the instinctive logic of common sense! Thus the tempter, with whom our Lord conflicted forty days; and the " God of this world," whose agency is said by the Apostle to have been so constantly employed to counteract the Gospel; and " the Devil whom we are to resist, that he may fly from us;" and our " adversary the Devil," to whose wiles we are exhorted to oppose a constant sobriety and vigilance, is, by a true Socinian interpretation, resolved into a personification—" the personified principle of evil."

But Mr. Southey meets the case with logic, though we cannot call it the "*instinctive logic of common sense.*" He would prove, that on Mr. Wesley's own showing, his doctrine of assurance cannot be sustained. Mr. Wesley doubted, was assured, and doubted again. Here, says Mr. Southey, triumphantly, was a plain contradiction in terms—

an assurance, which had not assured him. A true logic would have reminded him, that contraries may at different times be predicated of the same thing without a contradiction. Mr. Wesley does not say that he was assured, and not assured, at the same time; and as certainly as assurance may succeed to doubt, so may doubt follow assurance. But Mr. Southey has not been just to the case. Mr. Wesley does not affirm that he was unassured at any period after this. There may be visitations of doubtful suggestion, which do not destroy the habit of assurance; and this is what he in substance says, and no more. The rest is perversion, not logic. Even in the quotation which follows, Mr. Southey might have discovered this: "Now," says Mr. Wesley, "*I was always conqueror.*" Nor were those agitations of mind of long continuance. Mr. Wesley's journal from this time presents the undisturbed picture of a mind calm, confiding, animated and solaced with the fulness of faith, and peace, and hope. The bendings of the tree under the wind, whilst the stem is yet tender, is surely no proof that it is uprooted; by its very agitations it often acquires a deeper grasp, and owes to them its future firmness.

From this account of Mr. Wesley's early religious history, Mr. Southey's unfitness to judge of his whole character, and of the work he was appointed by Providence to perform, may be justly estimated. One cannot but regret that a writer who presents himself often under very amiable views as to temper and candour, and who is so respectable in literary ability, should be destitute of that knowledge, and of those principles, which alone could qualify him

to write on subjects, with respect to which his views will be greatly altered if ever he is made to understand, that the kingdom of God is not "in word only, but in power;" that there is in the religion of the New Testament, more than a sublime doctrine, an ethical purity, and a theological system; that it is intended to effect something deeper, more permanent and holy, than the excitement of a poetic sentimentalism; that, in a word, the gospel makes provision for the pardon of human guilt, for the restoration of conscious friendship between man and his Maker, that it has the promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit to all who sincerely ask it; and that, under his agency, the heart is comforted, and renewed, in order to the production of fruits of obedient righteousness. Mr. Southey ought, also, to have reflected, that Mr. Wesley's conversion to what he, on the best grounds, believed to be a vital and efficient Christianity, was not an individual case, peculiar to himself. Take away the mere circumstances, and it is substantially the same process through which all have gone, whether the learned or unlearned good of every Church, and of every age. Had Mr. Southey been better acquainted with the writings of the best divines, and with religious biography, he would have known this. All the observations he has bestowed upon the conversion of Mr. Wesley lie, therefore, against conversion itself; for of the sincerity of Mr. Wesley he has no doubt: all is resolved into this,—whether there is carried on in the hearts of obedient men, by the agency of the Spirit of God, his word, and his ordinances, a process of moral recovery and renewal,

Mr. Southey has not, I am persuaded, paused, to consider the tremendous consequences of the negative. If he had, he would himself much rather have incurred the charge of enthusiasm than have been the means of misleading one immortal being on a point so fearfully momentous. He would not then have given his authority to those wretched deceits in which the human heart is too prone to entrench itself, in order to resist the claims of heaven.

§ 2. *False Philosophy.*

It may serve more fully to counteract the mischievous effects of Mr. Southey's book, to point out other instances in which he has betrayed equal incaution, and indulged in unworthy sarcasms, at the expense of those great principles upon which religion is founded. I should call several passages, *insidious* attacks upon the Christian faith, did I not conceive them to be the result of some blinding system of at least partial unbelief, which he has hastily taken up, and persevered in, because he has never seriously investigated its evidences. A solemn examination of his religious opinions, is an exercise for which I heartily wish him leisure, or a determination to make it. This necessary, and all-important act to himself, may be the more confidently urged upon him, because his views on many religious subjects are not opposed merely to what is peculiar in Methodism, but to opinions which we hold in common with every Church in Christendom.

In the introductory chapter, Mr. Southey indulges a sneer at all religious sects, for supposing their leaders raised up by a special Providence. This might have escaped notice, from the gentle manner in which it is expressed, were not his incredulity on this subject corroborated by the spirit of the whole book, in which there is a total absence of any admission of the agency of Providence in the appearance, labours, and the effects produced in the world by eminent men, though when soberly applied, that doctrine affords a key to many particulars in their lives, not otherwise easily explained. In many passages, also, other causes are resorted to, in order to account for such effects, as though for the express purpose of excluding the interposition of the Governor of the world in the affairs of men. The doctrine of Providence may be ill applied ; its special favours and designation may be claimed for men very ill entitled to that distinction. One may be a powerful agent of evil, *permitted* in the course of judicial visitation ; another may be *raised up*, to enlighten and benefit mankind. The result settles this point, without weakening the general principle of providential government, on which even a false application rests. It can scarcely be now a matter of doubt whether Loyola or Luther was the agent designated by Providence for good. Providence must be allowed in both cases ; but in one there was permission of evil, in the other the appointment of means to benefit and bless mankind. There is a philosophy which, though not professedly infidel, excludes Almighty God, as much as possible without betraying itself, from the material universe, and substitutes in his place some sounding, but un-

meaning phrase, as "nature," or "the laws of nature." It is, however, a worse error when the same habit of thinking is applied to cases which fall under the moral government of God. The design of the Holy Scriptures is to bring the Almighty near to us; the object of this wretched philosophy is to hide him from our sight by surrounding us with innumerable second causes, and ascribing to them an efficiency which, in themselves, assuredly they do not possess. The Scriptures, and this philosophy, cannot both be true; and he who marks a providential design and interposition in almost every event, and carries truth into error by excess, thinks more nobly, and much more in the spirit of the sacred revelations, than he who regards nature and the moral system as vast machines full of self-moving powers, and places the great Author at the head, only as an idle spectator, who never interposes but when some great disorder is likely to happen, or when, having occurred, it is to be so rectified that all may again go on, self-animated, and self-impelled.

The quantum of positive infidelity in all such views is not small; and though some professed Christians have given them their sanction, they have been culpably negligent of the doctrines of their own faith. But even on their own principle of introducing a Divine agency only on *great occasions*, their sneers at the supposed providential designation of such men as Wesley and Whitefield, may be met without dismay. He who acknowledges a providential agency in the overthrow and elevation of human thrones; in wars which abstract a few leagues

of land from one power to add to the territories of another; in the invention of arts, which advance civilized life; and the diffusion of commerce, which gives the strength and intelligence of matured nations to those which are but in the infancy of the social state; and yet denies it in the lives and actions of men to whom the reformation of corruptions in religion, and the revival of its true spirit are, as instruments, owing; in the case of those who have established and matured the Bible Societies, and the Missionary Societies of the day; and in that of many modern Missionaries who are planting the imperishable principles of truth and godliness in Pagan countries, and laying there the wide and deep foundations of future order, happiness, and salvation, suffers his judgment to be influenced by very false measures of what is *great*, and what is *little*. He is like the peasant, whose dull attention is raised to God when the storm of winter howls round his hut, and the thunder-cloud darts its bolt upon the neighbouring tree, but sees him not in the showers of spring, and in that diffusive life which is taken up by every root, ascends every fibre, and on every stem forms, by a process at once the most beautiful and wonderful in nature, the fruit upon which millions are to subsist. Separate from their connection with the grand scheme of human recovery, (a point of view in which such reasoners do not consider them,) the revolutions of states and kingdoms, do not present occasions for Divine interposition so *great* as they pretend; and in comparison of the effects produced by the Wesleys, the Whitefields, the Eliots, and Brainards; the Cokes

and the Carey's; the Buchanans and the Martyns they are as the idle play, and the mischievous pastime of children. By these men, whose names the world will not deign to register in its kalendar, and to whom its historians will not devote one of their pages, have those great and peaceful revolutions been commenced, which will not end till "*the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord.*" If then we are to acknowledge the interposition of Providence in *great* affairs only, it is impossible to exclude it when such men come forth to purify and bless our world.

But for all this also Mr. Southey has a ready solution, without referring to Providence at all. "In all stirring seasons, when any great changes are to be operated either in the sphere of human knowledge, or of human actions, agents enough are ready to appear; and these men who become for posterity the great land-marks of their age, receive their bias from the *times* in which they live, and the *circumstances* in which they are placed, before they themselves give the directing impulse." Here is another attempt to philosophise; but it is superficial, and unsatisfactory. The object of it is to bar the notion, that Divine Providence from time to time, raises up, and qualifies men to produce great effects upon society; and to explain the whole of their agency by effects mechanically produced upon them by the operation of circumstances, "in stirring seasons." If this were the whole truth of the case, it would not serve Mr. Southey's argument. For as all men are not made great and active in these "stirring seasons," those who become eminent must have

something peculiar in their moral and intellectual constitution, to receive the impression of "*circumstances*," and to catch the spirit of the "*times*" in which they live ; and, their constitutional adaptation to these ends as certainly indicates the agency of Providence, as if they were endowed with the qualities requisite to produce great effects previously to the existence of the circumstances to which so much efficiency is ascribed, and independent of them. But the argument is built upon an entirely false assumption, both as to Mr. Whitefield, with reference to whom it is used, and Mr. Wesley. The time in which they commenced their labours was no "*stirring season*," in a religious sense. Mr. Southey himself has otherwise depicted it. They did not find religious energy ; but, under God, they created it. They were not awakened to action because other men were stirring ; they awoke first, and then aroused a slumbering world. In like manner, it was not the "*stirring season*" of Christian zeal for the salvation of Pagans, which kindled the love, and tendered the sympathies of the founders of modern Missions. The Christians of our country did not make them the friends of heathen lands ; but the generous flame was excited among the friends of religion at home by their appeals, and roused to increased vigour by their labours and triumphs. The friends of the negro slave, and the indignant opposers of the oppressions of Africa, owe not to the circumstances in which they were placed those high-toned feelings of justice, mercy, and national honour, which called forth their long-frustrated efforts. It was no "*stirring season*" of

compassion for Africa, when they commenced that career of humanity which has given immortality to the names of a Wilberforce, a Clarkson, and others. They brought, as to this great subject, the moral feeling of the country up to its proper standard ; they did not follow, but they led the way. I deny not, indeed, a re-action of circumstances, when they have been created, upon the minds of such agents ; but this, so far from weakening the argument as to Providence, only confirms it. It proves its agency both in persons and circumstances ; and such cases resemble those reciprocal adaptations in the material world, which so greatly confirm our belief in the existence of a Supreme Creator, by enlarging, and rendering unequivocal, the proofs of contrivance and design.

Mr. Southey has views of the Christian Ministry as singularly defective, whether he wish to be considered a Christian or a Churchman, as are his opinions on the subject of Providence. It would seem from these volumes, that he is not a believer in the direct influence of the Holy Spirit on the heart of man, though, of course, he prays for it whenever he attends Divine service, and I hope without any softening mental periphrasis. It would have read singularly, had he given us, upon his own principles, a paraphrase on that being “ moved by the Holy Ghost,” which every clergyman professes. It would, of course, have excluded all stirring of the affections in zeal for the glory of Christ, and compassion to the perishing souls of men ; all deep convictions of duty, and inward impulses to a work which, though involving a fearful

responsibility, *must*, nevertheless, be undertaken. This was the “*enthusiasm*” of Wesley and Whitefield; but he forgets, that it is the enthusiasm which is embodied, and glows in the ordination service of the Church of England, one of the most solemn, impressive, and holy forms by which Ministers were ever dedicated to the service of the gospel. Equally does he exclude Divine agency in the success of the ministry as in the call to it, and the effects produced by the preaching of the Founders of Methodism, of course, find ample explanation in his ready and never-failing philosophy. He allows no sanctification of the vessel for the Master’s use, and no interposition of the Master’s hand to fashion it to his own design, and to apply it, so fashioned, as the instrument of his own purpose. With him the instrument is all—it is self motive, and self efficient. This would be consistent enough if Mr. Southey considered religion an opinion, and a ceremonial. I do him the justice to allow that there are passages in his work which embody higher conceptions of its nature. He allows that by the preaching of Mr. Wesley, “drunkards were reclaimed, sinners were converted, the penitent who came in despair were sent away with the full assurance of joy; the dead sleep of indifference was broken; and oftentimes his eloquence reached the hard brute heart, and opening it, like the rock of Horeb, made way for the living spring of piety which had been pent within.” I will not make “a man an offender for a word,” nor stop now to show, that *eloquence* was not adequate to produce these effects, and that “the spring of piety” pent in the hard brute heart, is rather a

poetic imagining, than a truth of experience. It is enough that Mr. Southey allows in this passage a change in the hearts of men, produced by the preaching of a zealous and holy minister of Christ, a change as he elsewhere expresses it, "in the habits and moral nature of the proselytes." But in all this, Divine agency is not allowed; Mr. Southey has his collection of *causes* under command, and at the given signal they fail not to place themselves at the head of every remarkable result of this kind, and to assert an exclusive claim to its origination. But he shall be heard. Speaking of Mr. Whitefield, and the impressions made by his preaching, he says,

"The man who produced this extraordinary effect had many natural advantages. He was something above the middle stature, well proportioned, though at that time slender, and remarkable for a native gracefulness of manners. His complexion was very fair, his features regular, his eyes small and lively, of a dark blue colour: in recovering from the measles he had contracted a squint with one of them; but this peculiarity rather rendered the expression of his countenance more rememberable, than in any degree lessened the effect of its uncommon sweetness. His voice excelled both in melody and compass, and its fine modulations were happily accompanied by that grace of action which he possessed in an eminent degree, and which has been said to be the chief requisite of an orator. An ignorant man described his eloquence oddly but strikingly, when he said, that Mr. Whitefield preached like a lion. So strange a comparison conveyed no unapt notion of the force, and vehemence, and

passion of that oratory which awed the hearers, and made them tremble like Felix before the apostle. For believing himself to be the messenger of God, commissioned to call sinners to repentance, he spoke as one conscious of his high credentials, with authority and power; yet in all his discourses there was a fervent and melting charity, an earnestness of persuasion, an outpouring of redundant love, partaking the virtue of that faith from which it flowed, in as much as it seemed to enter the heart which it pierc'd, and to heal it as with balm."

Of Mr. Wesley he remarks, after quoting a pointed passage from one of his sermons,—“This was the emphatic manner in which Wesley used to address his hearers, *knowing as he did*, that there would always be some among them to whom it would be precisely suited.” Many observations of similar import might be quoted, but it is unnecessary. These are sufficient to show that Mr. Southey is inclined to ascribe the successes of faithful ministers to any thing but to a super-human cause. The passage respecting Mr. Whitefield, is truly eloquent, but that is its only praise. The extraordinary effect was produced by “*the man.*” To accomplish it he had many “natural advantages” of person and voice. He had also mental energy; for “*believing himself to be the messenger of God,*” or, as he elsewhere says, “being, as he believed, under the influence of the Divine presence, he spoke with authority and power.” This then was the secret of the success which followed Mr. Whitefield’s preaching; for that of Mr. Wesley it had the advantage of pulpit *finesse*; he spoke pointedly, *knowing it*

would suit somebody. But his artifice did not stop here, “ he knew how to produce effect.” He preached on his father’s tomb-stone in the church-yard of Epworth. Mr. Southey has the reason ; he did so, “ knowing he should derive a *deeper* passion from the ground on which he stood, like the Greek tragedian, who when he performed Electra, brought into the theatre the urn containing the ashes of his own child.” Mr. Wesley’s habits of field preaching threw him into places where the scenery was greatly varied. Mr. Southey’s poetic susceptibility here comes to the aid of his philosophy ; and he discovers that many of these localities had attributes of the sublime, or beautiful. Mr. Wesley himself was a man of taste, and was susceptible of the impressions of natural scenery. These impressions he often records in a very interesting manner in his Journal. Mr. Southey is thus enabled to discover, that he chose his stations with reference to their “ *effect.*” “ The situations in which he preached sometimes contributed to the impression ; and he *himself perceived*, that natural influences operated upon the multitude, like the pomp and circumstances of Romish Worship.” Mr. Southey is rather pushed for efficient causes in this part of his work to account for the effects produced by Mr. Wesley’s preaching, and he therefore resorts to “ the deep shade of the sycamore trees, which surround the farm-houses in Cumberland,” and “ the twilight, and the calm of the evening, as the means of heightening the impression.” The natural amphitheatre at Gwenap ; the projecting rock at St. Ives, with the murmur of the neighbouring surge ; and the spacious sweep of land under the

ruins of the castle and the old city wall of Exeter, also come in to his aid ; and these poetic causalities are completed by the opportune perching of a bird, on one occasion, upon one of the boughs of the old sycamores, “ singing without intermission from the beginning of the service to the end,” assisting the preacher, of course, in turning men from darkness to light, from the power of satan unto God ! We are not informed how similar effects were produced when no rocks reared their frowning heads, and when the sea was too far off to mix its murmurs with the preacher’s voice; when no ruined castle nodded over the scene, and when the birds were so provokingly timid as to hasten away to an undisturbed solitude. He forgets too that the peasants of Cumberland were much accustomed to sycamore trees about their farm-houses ; that the fishermen of St. Ives were daily in sight of rocks ; and that the people of Exeter had too often seen the nodding castle and the ruined city wall, to be much impressed by them. To the preacher these scenes were new, to his hearers they were familiar ; so that if we suppose the preacher excited by them, we still need the corresponding feeling in the multitudes which hung upon his lips. But had they been as new to them, the impression would have been comparatively weak. It is not upon uncultivated minds that such scenes strongly operate. Theirs is chiefly the “brute unconscious gaze,” for taste is awakened by education, and the hearers of Mr. Wesley on these occasions, at least such of them generally as received “the impression” in all its fulness, neither had the advantage of general education, nor had the

corps of Lake Poets then sprung into existence to crowd every country library with their reveries, and to prepare the public mind to throw itself into extacies and “raptus” at the sight of “a daffodil,” or the “warbling of a bird.”

I do not ask whether this reasoning upon the causes of the impression made by the preaching of the Founders of Methodism accords with the principles of revealed religion, but is it philosophy? If one of the main branches of that science is to assign the true reason of things, and to trace out the causes of effects; and if that be a false or a superficial philosophy which assigns to any effect a cause absolutely inadequate, or which will but very partially explain it, then has Mr. Southey’s philosophy failed him; and he has afforded another proof that as, on many subjects, religion is indeed the only philosophy, he who refuses to take its principles into his estimate of things, becomes thereby not the wiser, but the more mistaken man.

We have seen the causes assigned by Mr. Southey for the effects in question; let the effects also be more fully examined, in order to a just comparison between the one and the other. Those effects he acknowledges “*in most instances* to have been a change operated in the *practical habits*, and in the *moral nature* of the proselytes.” But he thus admits every thing necessary to his own refutation. This is the change expressed in the theological term *conversion*, and, in the Scriptures, by the phrase “*being born again*.” A conviction of the necessity of such a conversion in order to salvation is the source of those penitential and anxious feelings which charac-

terize the commencement of a religious course. The sense of danger, whilst this change remains unaccomplished, and the hope both of pardon and renewal, afforded by the gospel, call forth, in all sincere persons, strong desires, and earnest prayers: here then commences that new religious habit which never fails to excite the ridicule of the world. Such persons from that moment become, in Mr. Southey's estimation, "enthusiasts and fanatics;" language certainly of a very singular kind to be used by a writer who acknowledges that a moral change was actually wrought in them, and that it was "a direct and real benefit." As he admits also that such a change was produced, it follows, that a new order of feelings must, in the nature of the case, be created. That which was an object of desire now comes into conscious possession, and anxiety ceases; the ground of former fears, the conviction that no such change had been wrought, and yet that it was necessary to salvation, is taken away, and the peace and satisfaction which arises from a state of safety, flows into the heart. Mr. Southey, however, will not, or cannot follow out his own admissions, and this inward peace and joy are with him the sure indications of a fanatical state of mind. But a "change in the habits and moral nature" implies even much more, and much more must be granted by Mr. Southey, since he has granted so much. By Christian doctrines and principles I try his opinions; because if he is not a believer in Christianity, he ought in fairness to have made that avowal; and if he knows any thing of the Christianity he now professes, as it is found in the Scriptures, and ex-

pounded by all orthodox churches, he knows that “a change in the moral nature” of man, as effected by the doctrine and influence of the Gospel, includes the sanctification of the affections; dominion not only over sin, but also over excessive worldly cares and attachments; a devotional habit; a cheerful and active benevolence; a steady zeal for the honour of God, and the extension of religion; and, if no subsequent remissness take place, a constant improvement in the habits of holiness, and a growing preparation for the high and unmixed felicities of another state, where all the “*pure in heart*,”—all in whom this “change in the moral nature has been operated,” “*shall see God*.” Here are the effects, effects so lofty in themselves, and in their consequences, that no change of any other kind, and however effected, can bear the least comparison with this. A change which restores a fallen creature to the image and enjoyment of God on earth, and leads him through “the valley of the shadow of death,” without dread, into an eternal rest. To this result, as far as human eye can pierce; as far as sincerity, and faith, and well grounded hope, can be tried and manifested in seasons of sickness, and in the last pangs of dissolution, the preaching of the Wesleys, and of Whitefield, conducted thousands. The question then is, whether the cause of such effects is a human or a Divine agency. The Scriptures ascribe the change to the Holy Spirit—“born of the Spirit;” the “renewing of the Holy Ghost.” Agreeably to this we pray in the Liturgy that “the thoughts of our hearts may be cleansed by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit;” and acknowledge that “Almighty God alone can order the

unruly wills and affections of men." Mr. Southey, however, gives a very different suffrage. The unruly wills and affections of men in the cases in question were ordered, not by Almighty God, but by Whitefield's tuneful voice, and energetic manner; by Wesley's insinuating address, and pulpit art, and landscape preaching. By such agencies alone vice was controlled; men were made new creatures; the sting of death was extracted; the poor were made content; the sufferer in long and painful sickness was calmed, and soothed, and gladdened; and heaven-dawned upon eyes darkened in death, and closing without regret upon the scenes of earthly hope and felicity. O poor and pitiful philosophy! If it were in the power of any *man* to effect this, then ought he, in all reason, to become a God to the rest of his species. If these results are sincerely believed to have been produced by Wesley and Whitefield, without that "Divine presence" under which they "believed" themselves to preach and act, then is Mr. Southey's ridicule of the superstitious veneration felt for them by their followers very ill placed and inconsistent. Instead of being reverenced as instruments, they ought to have been adored as Divinities. If Mr. Southey be right, there are saints in the kalendar of the Romish Church, to whom that Church is highly culpable in offering its adoration, not because it pays them too much honour, but too little; it ought to exchange its inferior adoration of apostles and confessors and early missionaries, into that which is ultimate and absolute.

But it is not difficult to discover the reason of all this error. There is ordinarily an *adaptation* in

the instruments by which the Divine Being works in the accomplishment of his benevolent purposes. Those eminent individuals who, in their day have produced great effects upon mankind, have had great qualities. This adaptation both of persons and circumstances to the work they were intended to effect, forms a part of that chain of second causes, of which the professors of that shallow philosophy, which in modern times has often put itself forward with so confident a pretension, avail themselves, to exclude all consideration and acknowledgement of the hand of God. The discovery, that such second causes exist, was not so difficult that they have any great reason to compliment their own sagacity upon it; but it is from thence concluded that the primary and exclusive cause has been detected. There are, however, two classes of intermediate causes through which Divine power operates. In the first, there is no adaptation to produce the effect, in any stage of the process, as when the dead have been raised by the voice of a man, and when clay was applied by our Lord to cure a case of blindness. In the second there is a fitness to produce the incipient stages of the result: as when the eloquence and earnestness of a preacher rouses attention to the doctrines which he delivers; but the ultimate effect, the completion of the process, the successful issue, as much transcends the visible cause in the one case, as when conversion, or as Mr. Southey chooses to say, "a change in the moral nature," follows the ministry of such a preacher, as in the other. It is this circumstance which distinguishes the ordinary operations of God from miracles, which, to answer any end, must be of rare occurrence, and

take place under circumstances which shall make their author immediately visible to the most unthinking. But though the interposition of an apparently adapted cause between the Divine power and the result, is that which takes the wise in “their own craftiness;” and is, in just punishment, made the snare for all, who come to such subjects with minds predisposed to exclude Divine agency as far as possible, and with a most culpable reluctance to acknowledge the hand of God in his own works, the deductions of such men, notwithstanding the pretence of learning and investigation with which they are surrounded, are gross and limited. They are as irreligious and absurd as if it were asserted that the spring owes its verdure *solely* to the increased temperature of the atmosphere, and that this cause is so manifestly efficient, that it would be fanatical to advert to the agency of Him who leads the circling seasons, and works *by* the tepid moisture of spring, and the heats of summer, to produce and to mature the fruits of the earth. Thus Gibbon was led astray in writing his celebrated chapter on the spread of Christianity in the first ages. By a very similar habit of thinking Mr. Southey has got rid of the agency of God in the success of the ministry of the founders of Methodism, and, by consequence in that of every minister of Christ who has ever “converted a sinner from the error of his ways.” In the same way, could Mr. Southey dispose of the miraculous attestations to St. Paul’s mission, might he account, most philosophically too, for the rest of his history. That greatest of mere men had also qualifications adapted for his work, and they had their causal

operation. Mr. Southey could have described them most eloquently ; and in presenting his readers with the *rationale* of his success, there would have been as much room for the display of his philosophy as in the case of Wesley and Whitefield. He could have told us of the “stirring temper,” “the fiery heart,” the “ambition,” the “enthusiasm” of St. Paul ; of the “aspiring presages” of what he was able to effect ; of “the powers of which he was conscious.” He could have given us the reason of his preferring to visit cities rather than villages, because the inhabitants of the country are “less susceptible,” and “the effect could only be kept up in populous places, where men are powerfully acted upon by sympathy, whether for evil or good.” He could have told us also why Paul stood on Mars’ Hill at Athens,—it was “to produce a *deeper passion* ;” and the reason too why he led the disciples down to the sea side to pray with them,—“he himself perceived that natural influences operated upon the multitude.” I know not whether there were rocks like those of St. Ives on the Tyrian shore, but rocks of some kind there were ; and there was the sea, and probably there might be at the time a hoarse murmuring of its waves. If St. Paul were placed in the circumstances of an ordinary minister, and the awe of inspiration and miraculous powers did not surround him, so much does Mr. Southey affect a philosophising habit, that I should not be surprised at his attempting an investigation of his ministry on these principles. How much might he have said on the learning and zeal of Paul, and the eloquence of Apollos, as the *causes* of their success ? and yet the

Holy Spirit speaking by the former, has determined the question, both in their case, and *a fortiori*, in that of inferior ministers—"Paul may plant and Apollos water, but *God giveth the increase.*" Both had eminent ministerial qualifications, and to these were added the endowment of miraculous powers, but neither the one nor the other was the efficient cause of the conversion of men by their ministry—"God giveth the increase."

These instances of Mr. Southey's false or essentially defective views on religious subjects might be greatly enlarged, but topics of greater weight call for notice. If any should say, that it is too much to expect that the Poet Laureat should be a divine, the answer is, that, without a common initiation at least in the principles of religion, the Poet Laureat ought not to have uttered his *dicta* on the points referred to. It is surely not too much to expect that a *professed* member of the Church of England should understand his Catechism and the Book of Common Prayer.

§ 3. *Enthusiasm.*

Charges of enthusiasm, as may be supposed, make a very conspicuous figure in Mr. Southey's Book. The term has this peculiarity, that in every thing else but religion it is laudatory or innocent; in that only does it convey contempt and imply censure. Mr. Southey has very liberally applied it, and so indiscriminately, as entirely to confound the conceptions of his readers, if he did not mean to repre-

sent all ardour, all earnestness in religion as enthusiastic, as well as those excesses of the imagination and affections which are truly so. In this, as in other instances, he has no steady standard of judging. Either his mind never conceived such a rule, or he had not "the heart," faithfully to apply it. I shall supply the defect, and try the questions as they may arise by those principles which by Christians generally are held sacred. Mr. Southey cannot complain of this; if indeed he be recovered to the belief of the truth, he must not play fast and loose with it. He must not now look toward his Christian associates, and then towards his old anti-christian ones, "*No man can serve two masters.*"

A few cases which he resolves into enthusiasm may be properly adduced, as an antidote to the mischief with which some of his remarks are charged. His account of Mr. Whitefield might furnish many—but one shall suffice. "*He was now in a state of high enthusiasm.*" The proof is as follows. "Uncommon manifestations, he says, were granted him from above. Early in the morning, at noon-day, evening, and midnight, nay all the day long, did the Redeemer visit, and refresh his heart. Could the trees of the wood speak, they would tell what sweet communion he and his Christian brethren had under their shade enjoyed with God. Sometimes, as I have been walking, my soul would make such sallies, that I thought it would go out of the body. At other times I would be so overcome with a sense of the infinite Majesty of God, that I would be constrained to throw myself prostrate on the ground, and offer my soul as a blank to write on it what he

pleased." Whitefield's manner of expression is not always to be praised ; but it oftener offends a good taste than in this passage. Here are, it is true, strong emotions ; but when we are told that all is high enthusiasm, " the ungrounded fancies of a man's brain," as Locke describes enthusiasm to be, we must hesitate. Let the sentiments in this quotation be stripped of a dress of words, which to men of Mr. Southey's habits may appear novel and strange, what have we in this passage, but the communion of an ardently devout man with his Maker ; an awful and overwhelming reverence of the Majesty of God ; and the profound submission of a spirit which, recognizing his absolute rights and authority, loses all its self-will, and presents itself, in the spirit of entire sacrifice, to be disposed of as he may determine ? It is a poor and superficial way of thinking, that, because Whitefield's mind was naturally ardent, all this emotion is to be resolved into natural passion. Devotional feelings may receive strength and intensity from the natural habit, but what is it which moves the natural powers, and gives them this pious direction ? They were not always thus impelled and directed ; and in attributing this effect to enthusiasm, religion itself, by which alone the varied powers of the mind are sanctified and urged to those great ends for which man in his state of trial ought to live, is impugned. This communion with God, conscious and vital ; this prostrate awe of God ; this entire submission of soul to him, is the enthusiasm of the Scriptures, and the enthusiasm too of the most eminent devotional writers of all ages, and of the Church of England herself. Mr. Southey

commends Bishop Taylor's Holy Living and Dying in high terms. Let him hear then what this "splendid work" as he calls it, recommends. "Let this actual thought often return, that God is omnipresent—filling every place. This thought, by being frequent, will make an habitual dread and reverence towards God, and fear in all thy actions." "In your retirement make frequent colloquies, or short discourses between God and thy own soul. Every act of complaint or thanksgiving, every act of rejoicing or mourning, every petition and every return of the heart in these intercourses, is a going to God, and appearing in his presence." "He walks as in the presence of God that converses with him in frequent prayer, and frequent communion, that runs to him in all his necessities, that asks counsel of him in all his doubtings, that opens all his wants to him, that weeps before him for all his sins," &c. The good Bishop was certainly in this instance, on Mr. Southey's principles, as much an enthusiast as Mr. Whitefield; he enjoins the same habit of communion with God; the same awful yet delightful sense of the Divine presence; nor does he conceive that these "intercourses with God," of which he speaks almost in the terms of Mr. Whitefield, can be held without producing strong emotions.

Mr. Southey is a poet, and a good one too, but it is to be feared that his admiration of Bishop Taylor, is rather excited by the beauties of his works, than the sound divinity which they contain: that he has rather been dazzled by the coruscations of his fancy, as when he represents the "Summer burned with the kisses of the sun," and speaks of the "Rose

newly springing from the clefts of its hood, fair as the morning, and full with the dew of heaven, as a lamb's fleece," &c. than instructed by the steady light of devotion and holiness, which he every where holds up to direct the conduct of his readers.

Mr. Wesley too was "an enthusiast;" for every strong emotion of his heart which he himself refers to Divine influence, Mr. Southey can very satisfactorily explain by a much better reason. He quotes the following passages from his writings.

"I distinctly remember, that even in my childhood, and when I was at school, I have often said, 'They say the life of a school-boy is the happiest in the world, but I am sure I am not happy, for I am not content, and so cannot be happy.' When I had lived a few years longer, being in the vigour of youth, a stranger to pain and sickness, and particularly to lowness of spirits, (which I do not remember to have felt one quarter of an hour ever since I was born,) having plenty of all things, in the midst of sensible and amiable friends, who loved me, and I loved them, and being in the way of life which of all others suited my inclinations, still I was not happy. I wondered why I was not, and could not imagine what the reason was. Upon the coolest reflection, there was not one week which I would have thought it worth while to have lived over again, taking it with every inward and outward sensation, without any variation at all. The reason certainly was, that I did not know God, the source of present as well eternal happiness."

This was Mr. Wesley's solution; but Mr. Southey

has a better, and convicts him of enthusiasm. "Another reason was, that powers like his produce an inward restlessness, and a perpetual uneasy sense of discontent, till they find or force their way into action, and his restless spirit now found its proper sphere." Mr. Southey's reason is, however, so far defective that it explains the case only as to Mr. Wesley, and not as to men in general, all of whom are conscious of a similar dissatisfaction, though they have no powers like his, no ambition like that ascribed to him by his Biographer, to find or force their way into action. So thought Bishop Taylor, who with Mr. Southey is an authority, "Men's joys are troublesome, wavering and full of trepidation, not only from their inconstant nature but from their weak foundation—they arise from vanity, they dwell upon ice, and they converse with the wind—they proceed by inadvertency, and end in vanity and forgetfulness. So that as *Livius Drusus* said of himself, *he never had any play days, or days of quiet when he was a boy, for he was restless and unquiet.* The same may *every man* observe to be true of himself; he is always restless and uneasy; he dwells upon the waters, and leans upon thorns, and lays his head upon a sharp stone." This is one of those universal facts in the moral history of mankind which the "wisdom of the world" cannot explain, though it has been recognized by all its moralists, and investigated by all its sages. To merely human philosophy it will ever be a mystery why man is the most unsatisfied and disquieted sentient being in the creation; and why so often, in the conscious vanity of his

mind, he envies the superior satisfaction of the inferior animals.

“Deep in rich pasture, will thy flocks complain?”

This mystery Christianity explains: it is the mercy of God that the creature is not suffered to satisfy the soul, and earth is made uneasy to man, that he may learn to rest on heaven. Mr. Wesley's solution of his own case, which indeed has nothing in it peculiar to himself, is certainly in the spirit of our religion, and it is one by which Mr. Southey may profit. He may also have felt in his younger years the same restlessness and dissatisfaction; and if his philosophy should now determine, that these were the “aspiring presages” of future eminence; that there was a sort of instinctive tendency even in the days of his youth to the Laureatship of England; and that “powers like his” always produce an inward restlessness “till they find or force their way into action,” it may have a good issue if he seriously consider, whether some other, and a higher, power has not had its agency in these feelings, prompting him, as it prompts all, to a commerce of a superior kind than he has held with the powers of song, anxious to convey to his spirit a richer satisfaction than a world which has not been very unfavourable to him can bestow. Mr. Southey may start at the thought of becoming an enthusiast; but he may be assured that in such a conclusion he will make acquaintance not only with the wise and good of every age, but with those of his own church, a numerous band,

with whose names and writings I heartily wish him more familiar.

The charges of enthusiasm, which our author fixes upon certain irregularities which appeared in the early part of Methodism, and which now occasionally appear, shall be presently examined. With respect to these occurrences, a rule less severe is to be applied. There are considerations connected with them with which he can scarcely be supposed familiar; and considerable allowance may, and ought to be made for his opinions, though even here he has not always argued so fairly, as his own principles, defective as they are, required. But no such concession is to be made when he resolves into enthusiasm all those hallowed feelings of zeal for God, and tender compassion for men, which appeared so conspicuous in the great instruments of the revival of religion in this country, in the last century. If Mr. Southey must be heard, then I know not what man, in any church, distinguished by more than ordinary ardour of religious sentiment, and for great and persevering efforts in doing good, can escape this charge. Every virtue which shines in the conduct of those who are devoted to their Saviour and his religion, is darkened by the same shadow; and every holy feeling which glows in their hearts must be considered as deriving its warmth, rather from the artificial fermentation of earthly principles, than from the fire of the altar. "Enthusiasm" leads the Wesleys and Whitefield into Georgia: "enthusiasm" prompts them to their excessive labours at home: all those who, in the church or out of it, employed themselves in a work which, even

Mr. Southey allows, effected “great good both directly and indirectly,” is an enthusiast. The early coadjutors of the Wesleys, who went into the darkest and most barbarous parts of this country, to carry forth the light of religion, and exposed themselves to labours and sufferings in their calling, are, for this very reason, aspersed with the same reproach. The excellent Gilbert, who set the first example of bestowing religious care upon their negro slaves to the planters of the West Indies, was a man “enthusiastic by constitution,” though this great, and, at that time, hazardous endeavour, for which every man of humanity ought to pronounce his name with reverence, is the only overt act on which Mr. Southey can found the charge. When Mr. Pawson declined going to America, the reason Mr. Southey assigns is, that the “fire of his enthusiasm was spent,” as though to impress it upon his readers, that none but enthusiastic men can be expected to undertake the conversion of foreign countries, and to insinuate by this innuendo, that the noble army of modern Missionaries is composed only of visionaries and fanatics. If this self-denial; these unwearied and disinterested labours; this readiness to suffer; this lofty daring of the reproach of worldly men; and the principles upon which the whole was founded, lively and solemn views of eternal things, and of the perishing state of sinful men: a weeping sympathy for all distress; jealousy for the honour of Christ; and a conscientious carefulness to fill up life usefully, and to employ and improve the talents committed to them as those who must give account, be enthusiasm,—I ask, where, and what is religion? Let Mr. Southey give us his

own description of it, and enable us to detect the counterfeit. This I suspect would bring out a singular explanation of his views. The penitence of his system must never weep ; nor its joys illuminate the countenance, and fill the tongue with praise. Its zeal must be restrained within the bounds of a carefully measured activity, for a more than common energy would indicate the presence of the enthusiastic principle. His religious man must carefully observe established maxims, for to disregard them would be spiritual pride ; he must not make himself conspicuous, for that would be ostentation ; he must be careful not to go about in quest of doing good, for that would be religious knight errantry ; he must abstain from the indulgence of all great purposes of usefulness, for that would be ambition ; he must be specially careful not to put himself to hazard, for that would be an indecent “ longing for persecution.” He must be as careful of his words also, as of his conduct. He must never pointedly speak of eternal punishment, though a preacher, for he might possibly alarm the ignorant, and throw them into “ convulsions ;” nor of the doctrine of justification by faith only, “ though wholesome and very full of comfort,” for that would indicate an approach to “ the delirious stage of fanaticism ;” nor must he enjoin a too frequent attendance on religious ordinances, for that would be to “ apply stimulants to the fever of religious excitement.” For such a religionist the world is not likely to be much the wiser or better on account of his having lived in it ; and he would certainly run no hazard of being taken for an “ enthusiast,” though he should not,

like Mr. Southey, step forth from his seclusion, contemptuously to write that epithet upon the tombs of men who having “served their generation, according to the will of God, are fallen on sleep.”

§ 4. *Assurance.*

Mr. Southey’s more specific charges of enthusiasm are founded on the doctrine of assurance, taught by Mr. Wesley; and on certain irregularities in persons strongly affected under his preaching—in the early periods of his ministry.

As to the first, the precise sense in which that doctrine was taught by the Founder of Methodism is fairly stated. It was not the assurance of eternal salvation as held by Calvinistic divines; but the assurance given by the Holy Spirit to penitent and believing persons, that they are “*now* accepted of God, pardoned and adopted into God’s family.” It was an assurance, therefore, on the ground of which no relaxation of religious effort could be pleaded, and no unwatchfulness of spirit or irregularity of life allowed; for it was taught, that by the lively exercise of the same humble and obedient faith in the merits and intercession of Christ, this assured state of mind could only be maintained. This was Mr. Wesley’s doctrine: it was made by him a motive (influential as our desire of inward peace can be influential,) to vigilance and obedience. With Mr. Southey, this doctrine is, nevertheless, enthusiastic; it is the offspring of a disordered imagination. So he determines; as for the Scriptures, our Author does not

give himself the trouble to refer the question to them. They may support or refute it, for any thing he knows of their decisions : he has another mode of disposing of theological questions. In discussing religious doctrines with one who has so much fundamental error remaining, we ought, therefore, to refer to first principles, of which he has very inadequate notions, before subjects which so much depend upon them can be fairly mooted. He considers the assurance taught by Mr. Wesley as "*an enthusiastic confidence, excessive as the outrageous self-condemnation by which it was to be preceded, and in which it was to have its root.*" It is evident from this passage, that the doctrine of assurance could not be satisfactorily debated with Mr. Southey, until previous questions respecting the guilt and danger of men in their unregenerate state, and the degree of "self-condemnation" implied in the Scripture doctrine of repentance, were disposed of. Into such an enquiry I shall not, of course, enter ; but lest those who are not disposed to give up as lightly as himself the very principles on which the Christian system is founded, and by which alone it was rendered necessary, the natural corruption, and the actual guilt and danger of every human being without exception, should be misled as to the doctrine of assurance by charges of enthusiasm, it shall be briefly examined.

If, then, it is the doctrine of the inspired records, and of all orthodox churches, that man is by nature prone to evil, and that in practice he violates that law under which as a creature he is placed, and is

thereby exposed to punishment ;—if also it is there stated, that an act of grace and pardon is promised on the conditions of repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ ;—if that repentance implies consideration of our ways, a sense of the displeasure of Almighty God, contrition of heart, and consequently trouble and grief of mind, mixed, however, with a hope inspired by the promise of forgiveness, and which leads to earnest supplication for the actual pardon of sin so promised, it will follow from these premises—either, 1. that forgiveness is not to be expected till after the termination of our course of probation, that is, in another life ; and that, therefore, this trouble and apprehension of mind can only be assuaged by the hope we may have of a favourable final decision on our case ;—or, 2. that sin is, in the present life, forgiven as often as it is thus repented of, and as often as we exercise the required and specific acts of trust in the merits of our Saviour ; but that this forgiveness of our sins is not in any way made known unto us : so that we are left, as to our feelings, in precisely the same state as if sin were not forgiven till after death, namely, in grief and trouble of mind, relieved only by hope ;—or, 3. the scriptural view is, that when sin is forgiven by the mercy of God through Christ, we are, by some means, assured of it, and peace and satisfaction of mind take the place of anxiety and fear.

The first of these conclusions is sufficiently disproved by the authority of Scripture, which exhibits justification as a blessing attainable in this life, and represents it as actually experienced by true

believers. "Therefore being justified by faith." "There is *now* no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." "Whosoever believeth is justified from all things," &c. The quotations might be multiplied, but these are decisive. The notion that though an act of forgiveness may take place, we are unable to ascertain a fact so important to us, is also irreconcileable with many Scriptures in which the writers of the New Testament speak of an experience, not confined personally to themselves, or to those Christians who were endowed with spiritual gifts, but common to all Christians. "Being justified by faith we have *peace* with God." We joy in God, by whom we have received the *reconciliation*." "Being reconciled unto God by the death of his Son." "We have not received the spirit of bondage again unto fear, but the spirit of adoption by which we cry Abba, Father." To these may be added innumerable passages which express the comfort, the confidence, and the joy of Christians ; their "friendship" with God ; their "access" to him ; their entire union, and delightful intercourse with him ; and their absolute confidence in the success of their prayers. All such passages are perfectly consistent with deep humility, and self-diffidence ; but, they are irreconcileable with a state of hostility between the parties, and with an unascertained, and only hoped-for restoration of friendship and favour. So likewise the services of the Church, which, with propriety, as being designed for the use not of true Christians only, but of mixed congregations, abound in acts of confession ; and the expressions of fear and spiritual grief, exhibit this

confidence, and peace, as objects of earnest desire and hopeful anticipation, and as blessings attainable in the present life. We pray to be made children by adoption and grace ; to be “ relieved from the fear of punishment by the comfort of thy grace ;” not to be “ left comfortless, but that God, the King of Glory, would send to us the Holy Ghost to comfort us ;” and that by the same Spirit having a right judgment in all things, “ we may evermore rejoice in his holy comfort.” In the prayer directed to be used for persons troubled in mind or in conscience, we have also the following impressive petitions. “ Break not the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. Shut not up thy tender mercies in displeasure, but make him to hear of joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Deliver him from the fear of the enemy, and *lift up the light of thy countenance upon him, and give him peace.*” Now unless it be contended that by these petitions we are directed to seek what we can never find, and always to follow that which we can never overtake, the Church, in the spirit of the New Testament, assumes the forgiveness of sins, and the relief of the sorrows of the penitent state to be attainable, (1) with those

(1) “The third part of repentance is faith, whereby we do apprehend and take hold upon the promises of God, touching the free pardon and forgiveness of our sins ; which promises are sealed up unto us, with the death and blood-shedding of his Son Jesus Christ. For what should it avail and profit us to be sorry for our sins, to lament and bewail that we have offended our most bounteous and merciful Father, or to confess and acknowledge our offences and trespasses, though it be done never so earnestly, unless we do steadfastly believe, and be fully persuaded, that God, for his Son Jesus

consequent comforts and joys which can only arise from some assurance of mind, by whatever means, and in whatever degree obtained, that we have a personal interest in the general promise, and that *we* are reconciled to God by the death of his Son. For since the general promise is made to many who will never be benefited by it, it cannot of itself be the ground of a settled religious peace of mind. As it is a promise of blessings to be *individually* experienced, unless I can have personal experience of them, it holds up to hope what can never come into fruition. (2)

Christ's sake, will forgive us all our sins, and put them out of remembrance and from his sight? Therefore they that teach repentance without a lively faith in our Saviour Jesus Christ, do teach none other but Judas' repentance," &c.

" It is evident and plain then, that although we be never so earnestly sorry for our sins, acknowledge and confess them, yet all these things shall be but means to bring us to utter desperation, except we do steadily believe that God our heavenly Father will, for his Son Jesus Christ's sake, pardon and forgive us our offences and trespasses."—*Homily on Repentance.*

(2) " Faith is not merely a speculative but a practical acknowledgment of Jesus as the Christ,—an *effort and motion of the mind towards God;* when the sinner, convinced of sin, accepts with thankfulness the proffered terms of pardon, and in humble confidence applying individually to himself the benefit of the general atonement, in the elevated language of a venerable father of the church, drinks of the stream which flows from the Redeemer's side. The effect is, that in a little he is filled with that perfect love of God which casteth out fear,—he cleaves to God with the entire affection of the soul. And from this active lively faith, overcoming the world, subduing carnal self, all those good works do necessarily spring, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."—*Bp. Horsley's Sermons.*

" The purchase, therefore, was paid at once, yet must be *severally reckoned* to every soul whom it shall benefit. If we have not an hand to take what Christ's hand doth either hold or offer, what is sufficient in him cannot be effectual to us. The spiritual hand,

An assurance, therefore, that the sins which are felt to "be a burden intolerable" are forgiven, and that the ground of that apprehension of future punishment which causes the penitent to "*bewail his manifold sins,*" is taken away by restoration to the favour of the offended God, must be allowed, or nothing would be more incongruous and impossible than the comforts, the peace, the rejoicing of spirit, which, both in the Scriptures, and the services of all churches, are attributed to believers. If, indeed, self-condemnation, and the apprehension of danger, as Mr. Southey seems to think, have no foundation but in the imagination, the case is totally altered. Where there is no danger, deliverance is visionary, and the joy it inspires is raving and not reason. But if a real danger exists; if by various means men are brought under a serious concern to escape it; if it cannot be avoided but by an act of grace on the part of Almighty God, we must have some assurance of the performance of that act in our own case, or the guilty gloom will abide upon us. The

whereby we apprehend the sweet offer of our Saviour, is Faith, which, in short, is no other than an affiance in the Mediator. Receive peace and be happy: believe, and thou hast received. Thus it is that we have an interest in all that God hath promised, or Christ hath performed. Thus have we from God both forgiveness and love, the ground of all, whether peace or glory."—*Bp. Hall's Heaven upon Earth.*

" It is the property of saving faith, that it hath a force to appropriate, and make Christ our own, Without this, a general remote belief would have been cold comfort. ' He loved me, and gave himself for me,' saith St. Paul. What saith St. Chrysostom? ' Did Christ die only for St. Paul? No; non excludit, sed appropriat;' he excludes not others, but he will secure himself."—*Bp. Brownrigg's Sermon on Easter Day.*

more sincere and earnest a person is in the affairs of his salvation, the more miserable he must become if there be no possibility of his being assured that the wrath of God no longer abideth upon him ; and the ways of wisdom will be no longer “ways of pleasantness, and her paths paths of peace.” The doctrine of assurance, therefore, does not stand alone, and is not to be judged of as an isolated doctrine ; and for this reason it was quite consistent in Mr. Southey, to fix the stigma of enthusiasm upon the doctrines of human corruption, guilt, and danger, as those in which assurance “has its root.” With them the doctrine of assurance must stand or fall. Forgiveness implies a previous danger ; and if we have no means of knowing when that danger is escaped, we may ask for peace and comfort, but assuredly we do not perform a reasonable service. Such petitions themselves imply the doctrine.

Few Christians of evangelical views have, therefore, denied the possibility of our becoming assured of the favour of God in a sufficient degree to give substantial comfort to the mind. Their differences have rather respected the means by which the contrite become assured of that change in their relation to Almighty God, whom they have offended, which in Scripture is expressed by the term *justification*. The question has been, (where the notion of an assurance of eternal salvation has not been under discussion, and with this Mr. Wesley’s opinions have no connection,) by what means the assurance of the Divine favour is conveyed to the mind. Some have concluded that we obtain it by *inference*, others by the *direct testimony* of the Holy Spirit to the mind. The

latter was the opinion of Mr. Wesley ; but it was not so held, as to reject the *corroborating* evidence of *inference*. His words are, “ It is hard to find terms in the language of men to explain the deep things of God. But, perhaps, one might say, (desiring any one who is taught of God, to soften or strengthen the expression,) the testimony of the Spirit is an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God witnesses to my spirit that I am a child of God, that Christ hath loved *me*, and given himself for *me*, that *I, even I*, am reconciled to God.” This is Mr. Wesley’s statement of the doctrine, from which it will appear that, in his view, the assurance spoken of above as the only source of religious peace and joy, and without which such affections cannot be produced by religion, is conveyed to the mind immediately by the Spirit of God. Before, however, our “ rational” religionists, headed by Mr. Southey, open the full cry of enthusiasm upon this venerable man, it is right to remind them, that he never failed to connect this doctrine with another, which, on the authority of St. Paul, he calls the witness of our own spirit, “ the consciousness of having received, in and by the spirit of adoption, the *tempers* mentioned in the word of God, as belonging to his adopted children—a consciousness that we are inwardly conformed, by the Spirit of God, to the image of his Son, and that we walk before him in justice, mercy, and truth, doing the things which are pleasing in his sight.” The manner in which he here connects the testimony of the Spirit of God, and the testimony of our own spirit, the direct and the inferential testimony that we are in the favour of God,

and which he never put asunder, though he assigned them distinct offices, cannot be overlooked if justice be done to his opinions ; and Mr. Southey, if he understood the subject, is most unfair in not stating it. In order to prevent *presumption*, Mr. Wesley reminds his readers, that this direct testimony is subsequent both to repentance, and a moral change so vast, that no man can mistake it who examines himself by the Scriptures ; and on the other hand, to guard against *delusion*, he asks, “ How am I assured, that I do not mistake the voice of the Spirit ? Even by the testimony of my own spirit, ‘ by the answer of a good conscience towards God : Hereby you shall know that you are in no delusion, that you have not deceived your own soul. The immediate fruits of the Spirit ruling in the heart, are love, joy, peace ; bowels of mercies, humbleness of mind, meekness, gentleness, long-suffering. And the outward fruits are, the doing good to all men, and a uniform obedience to all the commands of God.’ ” This is Mr. Wesley’s doctrine, as stated by himself ; and from these extracts it will appear, that Mr. Southey has only taken that part of it which might best support his charge of enthusiasm, and has left out all those qualifications and guards under which this tenet was taught by the Founder of Methodism. I ask, then, for proofs of the enthusiasm of this doctrine as thus stated ? An enthusiastic doctrine is unsupported by the sacred records, but the authority of Scripture is here pleaded. “ The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” The witnesses are the Spirit of God and our own spirit ; and the fact to which testi-

mony is given, is that “ we are the children of God. “ And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, “ Abba Father ! ” Other passages of similar import occur in the New Testament ; and to them might be added all those texts which speak of the inward intercourse of the Spirit of God with believers, of his dwelling in them, and abiding with them the source of comfort and peace, and which, therefore, imply the doctrine. Mr. Southey will allege that other interpretations may be given. He, for instance, would furnish a different sense of the passages just cited ; but are we enthusiasts because we do not admit Mr. Southey’s interpretations ? This is not surely the rule by which he distributes opprobrious epithets. Other interpretations may be given ; but until we are convinced that Mr. Wesley and other divines have not given the most natural sense of the above passages, and one which is best supported by the spirit and letter of other parts of the Sacred Volume, the aspersion of enthusiasm will not certainly induce us to abandon our opinion. Such passages, as it appears to us, cannot be interpreted but as teaching the doctrine of assurance, conveyed immediately to the mind of true believers by the Holy Spirit, without allowing such principles of construction as would render the sense of Scripture uncertain, and unsettle the evidence of some of the most important doctrines of our religion.

But Mr. Wesley was not alone in this opinion, and Mr. Southey might have hesitated to brand him as an enthusiast for teaching this doctrine, had he known, that divines of the greatest eminence have

held it, and precisely in the way it was taught by him. In his entire unacquaintance with theological knowledge, he appears to think, that the opinion was an invention of the Founder of Methodism. But numerous quotations might be made from divines of the highest character in the church, to shew that it was no novelty. A few extracts, however, must suffice ; but they shall be selected from different periods, to show that this truth has not been without its testimony in the Church of England, from the time of the Reformation itself.

“In the 88th Psalm is contained the prayer of one, who, although he felt in himself, that he had not only man, but also God angry towards him ; yet he by prayer humbly resorted unto God, as the only port of consolation ; and, in the midst of his desperate state of trouble, put the hope of his salvation in Him whom he felt his enemy. Howbeit, no man of himself can do this, but the Spirit of God that striketh man’s heart with fear, prayeth for the man stricken and feared, with unspeakable groanings. And when you feel yourself, and know any other oppressed after such sort, be glad ; for after that God hath made you know what you be of yourself, *he will doubtless shew you comfort, and declare unto you what you be in Christ his only Son* ; and use prayer often, for that is the means whereby God will be sought unto for his gifts.” Again, “The patient man sees life hid under these miseries and adversities of this world, as light under foul clays, and in the mean time he hath the testimony of a good conscience, and believeth God’s promises to be his consolation in the world to come, which is more worth to him than all the world is worth besides ; and blessed is that man *in whom God’s Spirit beareth record that he is the Son of God*, Rom. viii. whatsoever troubles he suffers in this troublesome world.”—*Bishop Hooper. See Fox’s Acts and Monuments.*

“It is the proper effect of the blood of Christ to cleanse our consciences from dead works to serve the living God ; which, if we find it doth, Christ is come to us as he is to come ; and the

Spirit is come, and puts his *teste*, (witness.) And if we have his *teste*, we may go our way in peace ; we have kept a right feast to him, and to the memory of his coming. Even so come, Lord Jesus, and come, *O blessed Spirit, and bear witness to our spirit that Christ's water, and his blood, we have our part in both* ; both in the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, and in the blood of the New Testament, the legacy whereof is everlasting life in thy kingdom of glory. Whither, Christ that paid the purchase, and the Spirit that giveth the *seisin*, vouchsafe to bring us all.—*Bishop Andrew.* “*Sermon of the Sending of the Holy Ghost.*”

“ So God the Father loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life. So God the Son loved the world of his elect, that he gave unto them the Holy Spirit of promise ; whereby they are sealed unto the day of redemption ; whereby, according to the riches of his glory, they are strengthened with might in the inner man ; by the virtue whereof shed abroad in their hearts, they are enabled to cry Abba Father. O gifts ! either of which is more worth than many worlds ; yet through thy goodness, O Lord, both of them are mine. How rich is my soul, through thy Divine munificence ! How overlaid with mercies ! How safe in thine Almighty tuition ! How happy in thy blessed promise ! Now, therefore, I dare, in the might of my God, bid defiance to all the gates of hell. Do your worst : *God is mine, and I am his.* I am above your malice in the right of him, *whose I am.* It is true I am weak, but he is omnipotent ; I am sinful, but he is infinite holiness ; that power, that holiness, *in his gracious application, are mine !*—*Bishop Hall's Meditations on the Love of Christ.*

“ The Spirit which God hath given us to assure us that we are the Sons of God, to enable us to call upon him as our Father.”—*Hooker. Sermon Of Certainty of Faith.*

“ Unto you, because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, to the end ye might know that Christ hath built you upon a rock immoveable, that he hath registered your names in the Book of Life.”—*Hooker. Sermon on Jude.*

"From adoption flows all Christians' joy, for the Spirit of adoption is first, a witness, Rom. viii. 16.—Second, a seal, Eph. iv. 30.—Third, The pledge and earnest of our inheritance, Eph. i. 14, setting a holy security on the soul, whereby it rejoiceth, even in affliction, in hope of glory."—*Archbishop Usher. Sum and Substance of Christian Religion.*

"This is one great office of the Holy Ghost, to ratify and seal up to us the forgiveness of our sins. 'In whom, after ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of Promise,' &c.—*Bishop Brownrigg's Sermon on Whitsunday.*

"Let us be perfect, and of one mind, and the God of peace will be with us, and give us that peace and comfort within, which the iniquity of men may chance to deny us without. If to be secure of heaven and the glories of it; if to anticipate our final sentence, and to know we shall be justified and saved, when we come to die, a felicity greater than which no Christian can desire now, or hope hereafter; this we shall not fail of, if we follow the Apostle's direction; Let us be perfect, be of one mind, &c. to this blessed assurance also, the Spirit of God shall bear witness with our spirits that we are the sons of God."—*Archbishop Wake's Sermons, vol. I. p. 125.*

"It is the office of the Holy Ghost to assure us of the adoption of sons, to create in us a sense of the paternal love of God toward us, to give us an earnest of our everlasting inheritance. *The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God.* And because we are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying *Abba, Father.* For we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but we have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry *Abba, Father.* The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. As therefore we are born again by the Spirit, and receive from him our regeneration, so we are also assured by the same Spirit of our adoption; and because being sons, we are also heirs, *heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ,* by the same Spirit we have the pledge, or rather the earnest, of our inheritance. *For He which establisheth as in Christ, and hath anointed us in God, who hath*

also sealed us, and hath given us the earnest of his Spirit in our hearts ; so that we are sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession."—*Bishop Pearson on the Creed.*

"This is that πνεύμα νοθείας, that Spirit of adoption which constituteth us the sons of God, qualifying us so to be by dispositions resembling God, and filial affections towards him ; certifying us that we are so, and causing us, by a free instinct, to cry *Abba, Father* ; running into his bosom of love, and flying under the wings of his mercy in all our needs and distresses ; whence *as many as are led by the Spirit, they (saith Paul) are the sons of God, and the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God.*"—*Dr. Isaac Barrow's Sermon on the Gift of the Holy Ghost.*(3)

This doctrine, in fact, is clearly assumed in the formularies of the national Church, and in some passages very unequivocally expressed. (4) This

(3) Mr. Southey delights in old Chroniclers ; but perhaps the following passage from *Holinshed's Chronicles*, may have escaped him, and he may not have suspected that the old gentleman was as much an "enthusiast" in his views on this subject as Mr. Wesley. "It behoveth the godly to repose their hope in that grace which is freely granted through Jesus Christ, and to flee unto the mercies of God which are offered us in, with, and by his Son, to the end that we may at last find the *testimony of his Spirit working with ours*, that we are his chosen children, whereby cometh peace of conscience to such as believe." Vol. I. p. 45.

(4) "All these fathers, martyrs, and other holy men, whom St. Paul spake of, had their faith surely fixed in God, when all the world was against them. They did not only know God to be the Lord, Maker, and Governor of all men in the world ; but also they had a *special confidence and trust*, that he was and would be their *God, their Comforter, Aider, Helper, Maintainer, and Defender*. This is the Christian faith, which these holy men had, and we also ought to have. And although they were not named Christian men, yet was it a Christian faith that they had ; for they looked for all benefits of God the Father, through the merits of his Son Jesus Christ, as we now do. This difference is between them and us ; for

was also the view of Luther ; (5) and it is found in all the old Calvinistic divines. It is true that with them it is carried to an extent, which those who do not admit their system have disputed as presumptuous, and unsupported by Scripture ; but their view of it, as an assurance *also* of eternal salvation, is a peculiarity, which does not essentially affect the doctrine itself. They would have held it, though differently, had they not believed in Calvin's theory, for assurance of the Divine favour by the Spirit of

they looked when Christ should come, and we be in the time when he is come. Therefore, saith Augustine, the time is altered and changed, but not the faith. For we have both one faith in Christ. *The same Holy Ghost also that we have, had they,* saith St. Paul. For as the Holy Ghost doth teach us to trust in God, *and to call upon him as our Father,* so did he teach them to say, as it is written, *Thou, Lord, art our Father and Redeemer ; and thy name is without beginning, and everlasting.* God gave them grace then to be his children, as he doth us now. But now, by the coming of our Saviour Christ we have received more abundantly the *Spirit of God in our hearts, whereby we may conceive a greater faith, and a surer trust,* than many of them had."—*Homily on Faith.*

(5) "He (Martin Luther,) was strengthened yet more by the discourse of an old Augustine Monk, concerning the certainty we may have that our sins are forgiven. This he inferred from that Article of our Creed, 'I believe in the forgiveness of sins :' strongly insisting, that these very words implied not barely a belief, that some men's sins are forgiven ; but that each man is personally to believe for himself, 'God, through Christ, has forgiven my sins.' God likewise gave him much comfort in his temptations, by that saying of St. Bernard, 'It is necessary to believe, first of all, that you cannot have forgiveness but by the mercy of God ; and next, to believe that through his mercy *thy* sins are forgiven *thee.*' This is the witness which the Holy Spirit bears in thy heart, '*Thy* sins are forgiven *thee.*' And thus it is, that according to the Apostle, a man is justified freely through faith."—*Life of Martin Luther, by John Daniel Hersmschmid.*

adoption is not essentially connected with that system, as its advocates themselves will allow ; and that it was held by the most eminent divines of that school, we may therefore conclude to have resulted, less from their peculiar opinions, than the clear evidence of the Scriptures, that such an *attested assurance* is the privilege of believers.

Mr. Southey will perceive, by the above quotations, that Mr. Wesley is not the only divine to be charged with the enthusiasm of teaching and believing, that comfort is given to the penitent mind, "tied and bound with the chain of sin," and apprehensive of the Divine displeasure, by a direct attestation of pardon by the Spirit of God ; and if, in many instances, language equally explicit has not been used, nor the idea as fully brought out, by many modern divines of eminence, yet is the doctrine so clearly implied in their writings, and so substantially expressed, as to prove, that none who have true views of the Scriptures, of Protestantism, and of experimental and practical religion, can go many steps without allowing it. I do not here speak of those theologians who consider Christianity only as a superior system of ethics ; nor of those who regard the death of Christ as making up the balance of human merit before God ; nor of those who view Christianity as a mitigated law, requiring, in order to salvation, a low and imperfect obedience. Wherever these theologists are to be found, they are too opposed to the principles on which every Protestant church has been founded, to be regarded as authorities. To them, as to Mr. Southey, the point in question must appear extravagant and

enthusiastic. But where the doctrines of human guilt and danger, of repentance, the necessity of pardon, justification by faith, and the influences of the Holy Ghost, are held, as stated, for instance, in the formularies of the Church of England, and the writings of her founders, there assurance must be held also, and an assurance communicated to the mind of the penitent, by the Holy Spirit. The fear lest they should lead persons to trust too much to impressions ; and sometimes, perhaps, an extreme apprehension of being thought enthusiastic themselves, have induced many excellent preachers and writers to state the doctrine of assurance in a mitigated manner ; to teach that religious confidence and comfort, as to our personal acceptance with God, are to be obtained by comparing the moral changes supposed to have taken place in the mind with those characteristics of the children of God which are given in the Scriptures ; and that, when the correspondence is exact, we are warranted in considering ourselves in a state of filial relationship to God. But even in this view, if the enquiry be fairly conducted, the doctrine of the direct witness of the Spirit is inevitably involved. None of the divines of this respectable class conceive, that a mere reformation of the external conduct is a sufficient ground for the inference, that we are justified, and adopted into the family of God ; they all contend for a change of heart, concomitant with justification, including a renewed temper and hallowed affections—*love*, and *confidence*, and *peace*, and a *filial spirit*. They all state that this change, in all its parts, and throughout its whole process, is effected

by the *direct agency* of the Holy Spirit. Between this view, if it were fully represented on the principles of the New Testament, and the opinion charged so boldly with the most presumptuous fanaticism by Mr. Southey, there is no essential difference. Mr. Wesley's tenet is substantially included in it, and the apparent discrepancy arises from the principles assumed not being fully followed out by those who adopt them. They make assurance to rest upon the argument, that because *certain* changes have been effected in the hearts of believers, they are pardoned and adopted; but these changes are not outward only; they affect the heart, they produce holy affections; they include the production of *peace*, of *trust*, of *joy*, of *hope*; they are effected by the Spirit of God; and the whole forms the ground of the assurance, that we are the children of God. This may be further illustrated. The question at issue is, "Am I a child of God?" The Scriptures declare, that "as many as are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God." I enquire, then, whether I have the Spirit of God; and in order to determine this, I examine whether I have "the fruits of the Spirit." Now "the fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, meekness, faith, temperance;" and having sufficient evidence of the existence of these fruits, I conclude I have the Spirit of God, and am, therefore, a pardoned and accepted child of God. This is the statement. But among these enumerated fruits we find affections, as well as principles, and morals. We have "*love, joy, and peace*, as well as *gentleness, goodness, meekness, faith, and temperance*.

Now, if it be said on one side, that no one has a right to conclude that "he is so led by the Spirit of God," as safely to infer that he is a child of God, who has only the affections of "peace and joy" to ground his confidence upon, the same may for as good a reason be affirmed, if he have "meekness and temperance," without "love, and peace, and joy:" the love, and the peace, and the joy, being as much fruits of the Spirit as the moral qualities also enumerated. But this love, peace, and joy, are the fruits of the Spirit's agency, and they are the fruits of his agency as the Comforter, the Spirit of adoption, and from that alone can they spring. This view of the manner in which assurance is obtained, varies then from Mr. Wesley's doctrine only in being ambiguous. The love, peace, and joy of the Spirit, answer to his doctrine of the direct witness; and he argues, that they can only be the results of that pardon of which we are by them assured; and the meekness, gentleness, faith, and temperance, are his corroborative proofs that our filial confidence, and "joy in the Holy Ghost," are not delusions. So near must all those come together on this point, who believe in the religion of the heart, and the agency of the Holy Spirit; who admit that the change which Christianity effects in all who truly receive it gives peace to the conscience, and inspires love, and filial confidence towards God, as well as implants all the principles of a spiritual temper and a holy life. If any who profess to have such views of religion do not thus approximate on this doctrine, it is to be feared, that they ground their favourable inferences as to personal justification upon too narrow a basis;

that they leave out many of those premises from which alone the conclusion can be fairly drawn ; and it may be well for them seriously to consider whether they are “ led by the Spirit of God,” so as to have any authority to conclude that they are the “ sons of God,” when they know him not as the Spirit of God “ crying *Abba, Father;*” as a Comforter, abiding with them, and mingling with moral qualities that peace and joy which he alone can inspire, and “ shedding abroad that love of God in the heart,” which only can arise from a perception of his being “ reconciled to us by the death of his Son.” If, however, it should be asked, why, if the view of the doctrine of assurance given above substantially implies that of Mr. Wesley, he did not teach it in this somewhat less-exceptionable form, I answer,

1. That he had the sanction of the greatest divines of the Reformation, and of the Church of England, for the doctrine of the assurance of pardon and adoption generally.
2. That he might plead the authority of the greater number of them for the communication of that assurance to the mind by the direct agency of the Holy Spirit.
3. That his mind was too discriminating not to perceive, that in the scheme of assurance by inference from moral changes only, there was a total neglect of the offices explicitly ascribed to the Holy Spirit in the New Testament, and which on this scheme are unnecessary, viz. That of bearing witness with the spirits of believers, that they are the children of God—that of the Spirit of adoption, by which they call God *Father* in that special sense in

which it is correlative to that sonship which we obtain only by a justifying faith in Christ ; and that of a Comforter, promised to the disciples to abide with them “for ever,” that their “joy might be full.”

4. That in the scheme of inferential assurance, when stated, as above, in a way most accordant with the work of the Holy Spirit on the mind ; the doctrine of his direct agency in producing love, and peace, and joy, feelings which could not exist in the degree spoken of in the Gospel as attainable by believers, without a previous, or concomitant assurance of the Divine favour, is implied ; and he felt therefore, that it ought to be fully avowed and taught, both as a less ambiguous method of stating the doctrine, and because the sense of several important passages of Scripture are more fully expressed by it, and all the offices ascribed to the Holy Ghost, in them are acknowledged.

5. That his own experience, and the experience of thousands within his own knowledge, had given confirmation to his interpretation of the doctrine of inspiration on this subject. They had mourned as penitents; they had sought for forgiveness, through the merits of the Divine atonement; the burden of their sins had been removed; they had “love, and peace, and joy,” they were able to repose with filial confidence upon God : nor was this a transient emotion, it was “the permanent sunshine of the breast ;” it was not affected by outward troubles of life, it was unshaken in sickness, and unquenched in death. All this, with Mr. Southey, is enthusiasm ; but it was so connected with a holy life,

and a Christian temper, and with works of charity and piety ; it was so uniform in those who experienced it, and so eminently connected with "gentleness, goodness, meekness, faith, and temperance ;" and, in a word, looked so much like a better principle, and assimilated so nearly with what is described in the word of God as the work of the Spirit, and as "true and undefiled religion," that Mr. Wesley was as little disposed to succumb to the opinions of the philosophers and formalists of his day, who impugned it as an enthusiastic excitement, as we in the present, to bow to the equally important authority of Mr. Southey. The doctrine is grounded certainly on no forced, no fanciful interpretation of Scripture ; and it holds up, as of possible attainment, one of the most important and richest comforts of the human mind. It leaves no doubt, as to a question which, whilst problematical, must, if we are earnest in seeking our salvation, be fatal to our peace—whether we are now accepted of God ; it supposes an intercourse between God and the minds of good men, which is surely in the full and genuine spirit of the Christian religion, eminently called the "ministration of the Spirit ;" and it is accompanied, as taught by Mr. Wesley, though the contrary is by Mr. Southey so often ignorantly supposed, with nothing inimical to sober practical piety. That, like the doctrine of justification by faith alone, it is capable of perversion, under the mask of religion, is very true. Many have perverted both the one and the other. Faith with some has been made a discharge from duty ; and with respect to the direct witness of the Spirit,

fancy has no doubt been taken, in some instances, for reality. But this could never legitimately follow from the holy preaching of Mr. Wesley. His view of the doctrine is so opposed to licence and real enthusiasm, to pride, and self-sufficiency, that it can only be made to encourage them, by so manifest a perversion, that it has never occurred except among those most ignorant of his writings. He never encouraged any to expect this grace but the truly penitent; he prescribed to them "fruits meet for repentance." He believed that justification was always accompanied by conversion of heart; and as constantly taught, that this comfort, this assurance, could remain the portion only of the humble and spiritual, and was uniformly and exclusively connected with a faith, sanctifying and obedient. He believed that the fruits of the Spirit were love, joy, peace, as well as gentleness, goodness, meekness, and faith; but he also taught that all who were not living under the constant influence of the latter, would fatally deceive themselves by any pretensions to the former.

§ 5. *Sudden Conversions.*

Mr. Southey fancies that his notions on the subject of assurance are confirmed by circumstances. He is confounded, and even shocked, with the records in Mr. Wesley's journals of instantaneous impressions made upon many persons under his preaching, and that of his coadjutors, and with the sudden transition of others into a state of peace

and assurance. The inference, therefore is, that delusion and animal excitement supplied the place of genuine conversion.

This also is a subject on which Mr. Southey is very ill qualified to judge. If his views of religion, as far as they can be collected from his "Life of Wesley," be correct, then his conclusion is just; but if he be essentially erroneous, and what has already been adduced affords strong presumption of it, what he refers to fancy, may have been a sober reality, to which his philosophy may have blinded himself without altering, in the least, the facts of the case as to others.

All philosophy which opposes itself to the truth, is, sooner or later, found to be spurious; and Mr. Southey's will not long bear that test to which it must be subjected. It is at least not Christian philosophy. The facts before him were, that, not a few persons, but many thousands in different parts of the kingdom, were, by the preaching of Mr. Wesley and others, *suddenly* brought under a religious concern; that they were affected with sorrow for their sinful lives; that on being instructed in the Christian doctrine, that Almighty God "pardonest and absolveth all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel," they were brought, often suddenly, into a state of comfort and joy; that the course of their tempers and lives became changed; that they lived and died (6)

(6) Mr. Southey has a few slurs at what we call, with many other Christians, the "*experience*" of pious people, comprising an account of their conversion, their life, and the manner of their death. As to

in perfect contrast with their former habits and character, “adorning the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things.” These were the alleged facts for which Mr. Southey had to account; and had he conducted his enquiry in the spirit of a true philosopher, he would first have ascertained the truth of the facts themselves. He would have enquired, whether, though in some instances the impressions might be evanescent, the great majority of persons so influenced underwent a permanent moral change of spirit and conduct. To such an enquiry he might have received a satisfactory answer; as satisfactory as the good report of the nearest observers of the lives of the persons in question, in every place of their residence: evidence as strong as can be obtained when the characters of men are in question, and which, if resisted in this case, may be resisted in that of every man, of every profession of religion, whose reformation, and subsequent good conduct and Christian demeanor, are also mere matters of observation and testimony. In the instances under consideration, those effects were produced for which religion was given to man, and Christianity itself sent down from heaven. The commission of

recording the manner in which good men die, we refer him to the venerable Hooker. “The death of the saints of God is precious in his sight, and shall it seem superfluous, at such times as these are, to hear in what manner they have ended their lives? The care of the living, both to live and die well, must be increased, when they know their departure shall not be folded up in silence. Again, when they hear how mercifully God hath dealt with others in the hour of their last need, beside the praise they give to God, is not their hope much confirmed against the day of their dissolution?”—*Sermon on the Remedy against Sorrow and Fear.*

St. Paul was thus to reform and to convert men, by the preaching of the Gospel ; and when the same effects followed the preaching of the same doctrines, by men, endowed, as even Mr. Southey will sometimes allow, with much of the Apostle's spirit, what principle does he assume when he refuses to attribute them to the same causes,—the force of Divine truth, and God's blessing upon it? When the effects are the same, as far as human eye can discern ; as complete; as permanent; when the process through which they were evolved has no essential difference, what is the philosophy which assigns a different cause, but a wretched and pitiful prejudice which vanity and affectation have attempted to dignify with that appellation? If religious enthusiasm could produce such results, then is there as much reason to assign this as the cause of conversion, not only in the Apostolic age, but in all churches which have possessed a faithful, warning, and earnest ministry ; for wherever such a ministry has existed, it was instituted for the purpose of effecting such conversions, and it has always been more or less successful. If, on the other hand, we are warranted by the Scriptures to expect the conversion of careless, worldly, and immoral men from the error of their ways, by the faithful exhibition of the warning and inviting truths of the gospel in the ministry of holy men, then the successes of Mr. Wesley accord with the principles, the spirit, and intentions of Christianity, and by every Christian philosopher must be resolved into its influence. If his success was much greater than that of ordinary ministers, he was “in labours more abundant ;” if

it was more extensive, he filled a wider range of action ; if it was effected among a class of people usually most distinguished for irregularity of conduct, and barbarism of manners, the reason was that he sought them out, and carried into their streets, and places of resort, an instruction which they had never been disposed to seek for themselves.

But the mere circumstance of the *sudden* conversion of some of Mr. Wesley's hearers, is, with Mr. Southey, fatal to any other conclusion than that the excitement produced was fanatical. The justice of this conclusion shall also be examined.

Paley, who will not be suspected of enthusiasm, has the following observations on conversion.

“ At this day we have not Jews and Gentiles to preach to ; but persons in as really an unconverted state, as any Jew or Gentile could be in our Saviour's time. They are no more Christians, as to any actual benefit of Christianity to their souls, than the most hardened Jew, or the most profligate Gentile, was in the age of the Gospel. As to any difference in the two cases, the difference is all against them. These must be converted, before they can be saved. The course of their thoughts must be changed, the very principle upon which they act must be changed. Considerations which never, or hardly ever, entered into their minds, must deeply and perpetually engage them.—Views and motives, which did not influence them at all, either as checks from doing evil, or as inducements to do good, must become the views and motives which they regularly consult, and by which they are guided : that is to say, there must be a revolution of principle ; the visible conduct will follow the change ; but there must be a revolution within.”

This “ revolution within,” this “ change in the principle of action,” must take place at some specific time. It may be slow in reaching that point where

it gives the new and complete turn to the will, the affections, and the habits. This is not denied. Mr. Wesley, and the Methodists, never taught that all true conversions were instantaneous, though they believed many of them to be so; but how will Mr. Southey prove that all sudden apparent conversions are fictitious and imaginary? To influence the will, and move the affections to serious and spiritual objects, the truths of religion must be presented to the mind, for nothing beside has ever been known to produce those effects. But to some persons these truths may come in the slow process of elementary instruction, and careful advice from childhood; to others they may be presented, in all their great features, at once; or they may be suddenly revived in their minds; and to them they will have the additional interest which arises from novelty, their habits of life having taken them out of the way of regular instruction, and their religious education having either been neglected, or its impressions obliterated by the long practice of vice. In such cases, what reason can Mr. Southey give, why the display of the stirring and solemn truths of the Gospel, unfolded by a living preacher with earnestness, perspicuity, and pathos, should not produce strong and sudden effects, and that the impressions thus made should not be deep and lasting? A true philosophy might have informed him, that minds are differently constituted; that some men are slow to judge and to feel, and that what they hear rarely produces any great immediate effect. The impression is made by subsequent reflection: like the ruminating animals, they do not feed for

immediate digestion, but reserve that to a second process. In others the intellectual powers are more active, and the affections more yielding. Minds of this class are easily won to an opinion, or course of action, in the common affairs of life; and there exists no reason why this peculiarity of mental disposition should not influence religious experience, though a super-human agent must necessarily be supposed carrying on his designs, and exerting his influence, along *with*, and *by*, our constitutional qualities. It would be as manifestly absurd to deny, that true conversion may follow a sudden impression upon yielding minds, and to affirm, that it must be confined to persons of slow and hesitating intellects, as, that a decisive course of action, of any kind, cannot follow when the motives to it are urged upon a susceptible spirit, and the force of them is immediately admitted. Determination of the will, and perseverance in effort, are essential to rational and proper conduct of any kind. But with whatever variety the Creator has formed the human spirit, it is not to be supposed, that it has, in any case, a constitution which renders decisive choice, and perseverance, impracticable. These effects do not always result from slow and reluctant operations of mind; they are not inconsistent with susceptibility. Each disposition has its disadvantages, and each its excellence. The cautious need energy; the ardent watchfulness and support; but every thing rich in sentiment, firm in choice, and constant in action, may exist in each class of character. To suppose the contrary would be a reflection on our Maker, who uses variety as the means of exhibiting

his wisdom, but never sacrifices to it his own great and beneficent purposes, and the moral capabilities of his creatures. From those sudden yieldings of the mind to impressions of a religious kind which are so frequently the objects of Mr. Southey's scoffs, what then can be reasonably concluded? Mr. Southey may not believe in the necessity of Divine influence in order to conversion; but if he thinks conversion from sin to holiness possible, by any means; and that nothing more is necessary to effect it than the declaration of the doctrines and sanctions of religion, even then, had he considered the variety of our mental constitution, his philosophy would have been quite as respectable had he allowed, that the decisive turn might have been given to the will suddenly, and that such an effect is not only a very possible, but a very *natural* circumstance. The converts in question were not above the necessity of further instruction; they had, it may be granted, much to learn, and their very susceptibility exposed them to the danger of unsteadfastness; but it is enough for the argument, if views of the truth and solemnity of religion were communicated in sufficient force to influence a right choice, and to produce a new order of affections; that the determination was sufficiently decided to lead them to renounce evil, and to frequent, with seriousness, those ordinances of religion which would administer to them further light, and renewed strength. But we do not think with Mr. Southey, that conversion is a natural process, though carried on through, and by our natural powers. We are better instructed, I hope, in the Scriptures, and

in the doctrine of all true churches ; though, if we allowed the correctness of Mr. Southey's view of this great change, it is sufficiently manifest, that no good reason lies against the notion, that conversion may be effected much more rapidly in some minds than in others ; and that suddenness and slowness are mere circumstances, quite unconnected with the essence of the question. We believe the testimony of Scripture, that the Spirit is not only given to the disciples of Christ, *after* they assume that character, but *in order to* their becoming his disciples ; that, according to the words of our Lord, he is sent "to convince the world of sin," to the end that they may believe in Christ ; and that whenever the Gospel is faithfully and fully proclaimed by the ministers of Christ, it is "*the power of God* unto salvation to every one that believeth," and is made so by the accompanying influence of the Holy Ghost. If, for this belief, we are charged with fanaticism, we are in too much good company to be put out of countenance ; but if this doctrine be allowed, it will be difficult to prove Mr. Wesley a fanatic for his belief in the reality of sudden conversions. Who shall prescribe a mode to Divine operation ? Who, if he believes in such an influence accompanying the truth, shall presume to say, that when inspired truth is proposed, the attention of the careless shall be roused by a gradual and slow process only ?—that the heart shall not be brought into a state of right feeling as to eternal concerns, but by a reiteration of means which we think most adapted to produce that effect?—or, that no influence on the mind is genuine and Divine, if it operate

not in a prescribed manner?—that the Holy Spirit shall not avail himself of the variety which exists in the mental constitutions of men, to effect his purposes of mercy by different methods?—and that the operations of grace shall not present, as well as those of nature, that beauteous variety which so much illustrates the glory of Him “who worketh all in all?” And who shall say, that even the peculiarities of men’s natures shall not, in many instances, be even set aside in the course of a Divine and secret operation, touching the springs of action, and opening the sources of feeling; giving an intensity of action to the one, and a flow to the other, which shall more eminently mark *his* finger in a work which his own glory, and the humility proper to man, require should be known and acknowledged as the work of God alone? Assuredly there is nothing in the reason of the case to fix the manner of producing such effects to one rule, and nothing in Scripture. Instances of sudden conversion occur in the New Testament in sufficient number to warrant us to conclude, that this may be often the mode adopted by Divine wisdom, and especially in a slumbering age, to arouse attention to long-despised and neglected truths. The conversions at the day of Pentecost were sudden, and, for any thing that appears to the contrary, they were real; for the persons so influenced were thought worthy to be “added to the church.” Nor was it by the miracle of tongues that the effect was produced. If miracles could have converted them, they had witnessed greater than even that glorious day exhibited. The dead had been raised up in their

sight ; the earth had quaked beneath their feet ; the sun had hid himself, and made an untimely night ; the graves had given up their dead ; and Christ himself had arisen from a tomb sealed and watched. It was not by the impression of the miracles of tongues alone, but by that supervenient gracious influence which operated with the demonstrative sermon of Peter, after the miracle had excited the attention of his hearers, that they were “pricked in their hearts, and cried, Men and brethren, what shall we do ?”

The only true rule of judging of professed conversion is its fruits. The mode may vary from circumstances of which we are not the judges, nor can be, until we know more, both of the mystic powers of mind, and of that intercourse which Almighty God in his goodness condescends to hold with it. Our Author is certainly not a better judge of these matters than others ; and the reality of the conversion of thousands by the honoured ministry of Mr. Wesley stands on evidence too decisive to be shaken by the objections he takes to the mode : and it would be still unshaken were those objections more powerful than he has been able to make them. By the effects we are content that the conversions produced under the preaching of the founders of Methodism should be judged. (7)

(7) Of similar effects produced in New England, in the year 1734, and of which Mr. Southey probably never heard, or he would not have spoken of Methodism producing a “*new disease*,” President Edwards thus speaks :—

“The extraordinary influence that has lately appeared on the minds of the people in this land, causing in them an uncommon concern

To Mr. Southey however, it seems, eminently strange and absurd, not only that inconsiderate

about the things of religion, is undoubtedly, in general, from the Spirit of God." There are but two things that need to be known, in order to such a work's being judged of, viz. Facts and Rules. The rules of the word of God we have laid before us; and as to facts, there are but two ways that we can come at them, so as to be in a capacity to compare them with the rules, either by our own observation, or by information from others that have had opportunity to observe.

" As to this work that has lately been carried on in the land, there are so many things concerning it that are notorious, as, unless the apostle John was out in his rules, are sufficient to determine it to be in general the work of God. It is notorious that the Spirit that is at work, takes off person's minds from the vanities of the world, engages them in a deep concern about eternal happiness, puts them upon earnestly seeking their salvation, and convinces them of the dreadfulness of sin, and of their own guilty and miserable state by nature. It is notorious that it awakens men's consciences, and makes them sensible of the dreadfulness of God's anger, and causes in them a great desire, and earnest care and endeavour to obtain his favour. It is notorious that it puts them upon a more diligent improvement of the means of grace which God has appointed. It is also notorious, that, in general, it works in persons a greater regard to the word of God, and desire of reading it. And it is notoriously manifest, that the Spirit in general operates as a Spirit of truth, making persons more sensible of what is really true, in those things that concern their eternal salvation: as that they must die, and that life is very short and uncertain; that there is a great and just God, whom they are accountable to, and that they stand in great need of a Saviour. It is furthermore notorious, that this Spirit makes persons more sensible of the value of that Jesus that was crucified, and their need of him; and that it puts them upon earnestly seeking an interest in him. It cannot be but these things should be apparent to people in general through the land: for these things are not done in a corner. The work that has been wrought, has not been confined to a few towns, in some remote parts of the land, but has been carried on in many places, and in the principal and most populous, and public places in it. And it has now been continued for a considerable time, so that there has been a great deal of opportunity to observe the manner of the work."—*Distinguishing Marks of a Work of God.*

persons should suddenly become serious under the preaching and advices of Mr. Wesley and his coadjutors; but that those who were thus impressed should often profess to have obtained the forgiveness of sin, and to have been brought, in some cases instantaneously, into a state of peace and joy of spirit, so as to be able to assign the time of their conversion. His observations on these facts can create no surprize. The wonder indeed is, from his almost total unacquaintance with the Scriptures, and with theological writings, and from the very superficial attention he has paid to religious subjects, that he has allowed so much good to have arisen from what to him appeared, and could not but appear to be, "the high fever of enthusiasm." He is therefore less to be censured for the unfavourable sentences he pronounces upon those who made profession of this *experience*, (a term which, of course, he ridicules,) than for writing on a subject for which he was every way so ill furnished.

It was remarked in the observations on the doctrine of assurance, that before that subject could be discussed with such writers as our Author, several important previous questions must be settled. The same remark applies to the communication of assurance instantaneously to the mind of a true penitent. I shall, however, assume, that the doctrine of assurance, generally considered, has been already proved from the Scriptures; and if assurance of the favour and forgiveness of the Being we have offended be attainable, through the merits and intercession of our Saviour, and by the instrumentality of repentance and an humble trust, it must follow, in the

first place, that forgiveness itself is an instantaneous act. Whatever may be said of the gradual, or instantaneous manner in which a perception of that act is conveyed to the mind, the act of grace admits of no degrees. It is in itself, and must be from its nature, instantaneous and complete. There is in Almighty God a kind and benignant disposition to all mankind ; but as actual forgiveness, and with it adoption, and the conferring a title to eternal life, are suspended upon conditions, the performance of those conditions, of which none but God himself can be the Judge, is necessary to pardon. In the moment they are performed, the act of grace takes place, and necessarily it can be but the act of a moment—one single volition, so to speak, of the mind of God. Now whether our inward perception of this change in our relations to a Being whom we have offended, but who is now reconciled to us through the merit of his Son, be instantaneous too, and answers to the act of forgiveness in the mind of God, is the second step of the enquiry ; and, allowing us the former premises, the answer must be, in all ordinary cases, in the affirmative. It is surely unreasonable to suppose, that when an act of forgiveness has taken place, the mind should be left in its former doubts, and darkness ; that it should remain oppressed with fear, when the ground of apprehension is, in fact, taken away ; or that those intercourses between God and the mind in acts of devotion, the existence of which all orthodox divines have held, should not assume a different character, and become *filial* on one part, and *paternal* on the other, and therefore be supporting and con-

solatory. The Scriptures abound in similar representations. To all true believers the Almighty is represented as the “God of peace and consolation;” as “a Father;” as “dwelling in them, and walking in them.” Nay, there is a marked distinction between the assurances of grace and favour made to penitents, and to believers. The declarations as to the former are highly consolatory; but they constantly refer to some future good designed for them by the God before whom they humble themselves, for the encouragement of their seeking prayers, and their efforts of trust. “To that man will *I look*, (a Hebraism for showing favour,) saith the Lord, who is poor, and of a contrite spirit.” The “weary and heavy laden” are invited to Christ, that he may “give rest to their souls.” The Apostles exhorted men to repent and be baptized, *et ceteris*, in order to the remission of sins. But to all who, in the Christian sense, are believers, or who have the faith by which we are justified, the language is much higher. “We have peace with God.” We joy in God, by whom we have received the atonement. They are exhorted “to rejoice in the Lord always.” “The spirit of bondage” is exchanged for “the Spirit of adoption.” They are “Christ’s.” They are “children, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.” They “rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” They are “always confident, knowing that whilst at home in the body, they are absent from the Lord, but that when absent from the body they shall be present with the Lord.”

This state of confidence, joy, and hope then is not only attainable by true Christians; but it forms

an entire contrast with their feelings in the early stage of their religious experience, when, as the Church of England expresses it, they "are tied and bound with the chain of their sins," and are beseeching "the pitifulness of the Divine mercy to unloose them." Now between these states of religious depression and peace, there is a vast distance: and though the rapidity with which the mind may pass from one to the other, is a subject which we cannot reduce to any law, or pretend to bring within any rule, without betraying either ignorance or presumption, there must still be a point, whether reached gradually, or by the sudden influence of encouraging truths presented to the mind, under the grace of the Divine Spirit, exciting its trust, where doubt gives place to confidence, and agitation is tranquillized by the power of reposing entirely on the promises of God. And this holds equally good, whether the theory of assurance be, that it is obtained indirectly by inference from the Scriptures, or by immediate communication from the Spirit of God, corroborated by those fruits and characters, which in the Scriptures are said to accompany his presence as the Spirit of adoption, and the Comforter. The mode is not essential to the argument, though an important question in itself. In either case the assurance which is complete and satisfactory, however obtained, stands opposed to the previous state of doubt; and the transition from the one to the other, whatever may be the degree of approach to assurance; however alleviated the previous doubts may have been by hope, on one side of this point of rest and confidence, and how-

ever the subsequent faith may advance in strength on the other, can be only the work of a moment : a fact of which our consciousness in other respects may well enough assure us. The transition will be more marked in some cases than in others ; that depends upon the state of the mind immediately previous to its becoming assured of the Divine favour, as that again depends both upon natural susceptibility, and (with all deference to Mr. Southey,) upon the modes of Divine operation. The rising of the sun is more exactly marked at the equator than near the poles, because there is less twilight. A poignant distress of mind, a feeling such as that which the Liturgy describes under the term “miserable sinners,” may remain until the moment the mind is enabled to apprehend and appropriate to itself the consolatory promises of the gospel ; and in that case, as the change is more strikingly distinguished, it is a natural result that the time should be often ascertained ; that it should be deeply written in the tablet of a grateful memory, and be recurred to with humble and adoring admiration of the love and condescension of God. Paley has a passage in his Sermons immediately following the extract before given, which, though on conversion generally, is applicable here.

“A change so entire, so deep, and important as this, I do allow to be conversion ; and no one, who is in the situation above described, can be saved without undergoing it ; and he must, necessarily, both be sensible of it at the same time, and remember it all his life afterwards. It is too momentous an event ever to be forgotten. A man might as easily forget his escape from a shipwreck. Whether it was sudden, or whether it was gradual, if it was effected, (and the fruits will prove

that,) it was a true conversion : and every such person may justly, both believe and say to himself, that he was converted at a particular assignable time. It may not be necessary to speak of his conversion ; but he will always think of it with unbounded thankfulness to the Giver of all grace, the Author of all mercies, spiritual as well as temporal."

Both on the subject of assurance, and its communication to the mind, Mr. Southey has judged, as though these doctrines were isolated from the common faith, and almost peculiar to Mr. Wesley ; and from this his indecent charges of fanaticism have proceeded. If the Scriptures connect grief of mind with repentance ; and pardon, filial intercourse with God, and peace with faith ; the doctrine of assurance inevitably follows : but if repentance be a form of contrite words, and faith a simple opinion, and devotion a ceremony, then are we, and all who hold the doctrine, fanatical and visionary. Let Mr. Southey choose between the horns of the dilemma. In one case he must recal or very much modify his aspersions of Mr. Wesley, and his followers; in the other he must renounce his profession of Christianity, and return to Socinianism or infidelity.

§ 6. *Enthusiastic Extravagancies.*

Mr. Southey gives special prominence in his work to what he calls "the extravagancies" of Methodism. The "outcries" and other irregularities, which occurred in consequence of the preaching of Mr. Wesley, and his fellow-labourers, are carefully collected, and on every occasion presented to the reader, together with such extracts from Mr. Wesley's

Journals, from letters, and other publications, as may best serve the purpose of exhibiting a frightful or ridiculous picture. The occurrences thus selected as illustrations of the enthusiasm of the founders of Methodism and their followers, could not but arrest the attention of Mr. Southey ; and it will, without hesitancy, be allowed that a biography of Mr. Wesley would have been incomplete without due notice of them. They were circumstances which Mr. Wesley himself felt no wish to suppress, and are fair subjects of remark by a writer of his life. That they are brought forward is not, therefore, matter of complaint; but the manner in which they are exhibited, and the use made of them, lie open to animadversion. Whether these “extravagancies” were positive evils, or admit of explanation, or excuse, are questions I lay aside for the present. Let them be considered as ridiculous and as hypocritical as Mr. Southey pleases, this shall not now be disputed with him. The objection is, that they are not stated fairly and liberally.

In the first place, they are made so prominent, that the impression upon the reader, not acquainted with the History of Methodism is, that in its early stages at least, wherever Mr. Wesley and his preachers went, scenes of confusion and disorder occurred among their hearers ; and that outeries, bodily convulsions, raptures, and extacies uniformly marked the introduction and progress of Methodism. This error has arisen partly from the “Life of Wesley” having been compiled only from books. When these extraordinary circumstances occurred, they were of course marked; and because they were *extraordinary*

they found a place in Mr. Wesley's Journals. The recurrence of them, there, has led Mr. Southey to suppose, that they were much more general and frequent than is the fact; but had he even more carefully perused the Journals, he would have seen Mr. Wesley prosecuting his labours through a vast extent of country, raising up societies, and scattering the seeds of truth and piety, without any of these extraordinary circumstances occurring. *Strong* impressions were undoubtedly made on the minds of his hearers; great numbers of them were brought under a religious concern, deep, powerful, and permanent; in almost every place the preaching of the doctrines of atonement and pardon dried up the tears of the contrite, and turned their sorrows into joy. These effects were general, but Mr. Southey has misled his readers, unintentionally, I grant, because he was misled himself, by representing the irregularities on which he dwells with so much emphasis as very frequent, and almost universal. Powerful awakenings of the dormant mind constantly followed a ministry so singularly owned of God; but they were not always accompanied by those circumstances which Mr. Southey deems extravagant, and which, in some cases, were so in reality. He has been attracted to that stream of religious influence which Mr. Wesley was the instrument of conveying into every part of the nation, only where, by accidental occurrences, it whirled in eddies, and was chafed among the shallows: but he has refused to follow it when, in deep and noiseless flow, it spread along its course the beauty and the fruit of moral vegetation.

It is another mistake of Mr. Wesley's biographer, and it is not unaccompanied with illiberal remark, that Mr. Wesley was eager to record and publish accounts of the extraordinary effects produced by his preaching "as proofs of his power." Mr. Wesley was no boaster. He was often obliged to speak of himself and of that work which he had been the instrument of effecting, because his character and motives were the constant subjects of the intemperate abuse of his enemies. He was under the necessity of bringing forward the effects produced by the system of which he was the founder and the head, to show that the work so effected was of God, a revival of true religion in the land. He could not hide it, that he and his first coadjutors had been the great agents in that work; and to attempt it would have been mere affectation. But few men who have done so much in their lives, have been so free from boasting and vanity: no successful minister of Christ ever more humbly laid the trophies won from the world by his efforts at the feet of him by whom the victory was achieved. Mr. Southey, indeed, like the rest of his school, considers it spiritual pride and boasting for any to speak of themselves, even as "instruments" in the hand of God, however humble the manner in which this may be professed; and this is a conclusion natural enough to men who are not conscious of having ever been employed under a divine direction in the accomplishment of any great and beneficial purpose, and to whom prayer for success in such an endeavour would appear gross enthusiasm. This is the fault of the school in which Mr. Southey has been

trained. I dispute not with it. If Mr. Wesley erred in this, he erred with St. Paul, and with every minister of Christ distinguished for his success in the conversion of men, and the revival of the spirit of true religion. All true Christians know that a belief in their own instrumentality as agents of the divine mercy to men, is perfectly consistent with humility of mind; and with them it will be a sufficient answer to the aspersion, that Mr. Wesley was anxious to record singular successes, and answers to his prayers, in order to "proclaim his power," that this is contradicted both by his writings, and the spirit in which he lived and died. He recorded them, in every case where he believed the effect to be genuine, not to proclaim his own power, but "*the power of God.*"

Nor does it follow, as Mr. Southey seems to have understood it, that every instance of strong impression produced under his preaching was considered by Mr. Wesley as genuine; or that, by recording such circumstances in his Journal or Magazine, he gave an opinion in their favour. He believed some of these effects to be the results of natural sympathy; others to be imitations of Mr. Southey's "personified principle of evil," to bring into disrepute the work of the Spirit of God upon the hearts of men, of the reality of which he was firmly persuaded, and on grounds perhaps as strong as those on which Mr. Southey accounts it enthusiasm; for he brought to the examination of the question, beyond all doubt, quite as good a store of logic and of learning. Some deceptions he not only admitted, but publicly stated, not indeed to establish the sweeping conclusion that all was unreal, because a part, a very small part, was visionary;

that all was of satan, because all was not of God. Mr. Wesley was wisely tender even in cases to which Mr. Southey and other superficial thinkers on religious subjects would have showed no moderation; and sufficient reasons might be given to justify his conduct, though in some instances, his charity was carried to excess. He had seen strong and singular effects produced upon many of his hearers; he had also seen great good, amounting to an entire moral change, consequent upon them. It was his intense desire to see this latter result produced which made him regard the former of much less consequence than they appear to Mr. Southey. He lost the *circumstances* in the *essence* of the case; Mr. Southey would have measured the essence by the circumstances. Had Mr. Southey been a clergyman at that period, in vain would a disconsolate spirit have come to him for spiritual advice, except the phrase in which it was sought had been quite "rational," and the deportment of the person very measured. The mention of the "burden of sin," though found in his Liturgy, would have called up all his suspicions of fanaticism; a sob from a broken heart would have seriously disturbed his philosophic composure; and any expression of mental agony in the positions of the body, or aspect of the countenance, would probably have put him to flight. Mr. Wesley had other views. He had seen real good consequent upon these circumstances; but he never believed that good to flow from them *as its cause*. He went higher than that. Those emotions might be the collateral or the secondary effects of the same cause,

or they might result from a different one. In every case he hoped for good, and therefore sought it; one great secret of his success. He did not stay to contend with circumstances, even when they were not agreeable to him; he applied himself directly to the heart. He instructed the ignorant; pointed the sorrowful to the only source of comfort; explained the Scriptural method of salvation; and gradually drew off the mind from what was visionary, and in truth, extravagant, (and both occasionally did occur,) to the sober realities of religion, taught in his own sound doctrine, and enforced by his practical discipline. This was the way in which Mr. Wesley treated all cases of extraordinary emotion; and he judged better than a thousand sciolists when he concluded, that, in ignorant and inexperienced persons, much good principle may be mixed with fancy and oblique feeling. He acted too in the right spirit of a Christian minister: he had "compassion on them that were ignorant," as well as "out of the way." From a frigid philosophy and a callous formality such persons would have derived nothing; their errors had remained with them, and their latent virtues perished under the load. Many a spirit, in danger both from ignorance and its own peculiar constitution, was saved by his confiding charity, which thought no evil; and, if in some cases there were deceptions, and in others an insuperable obstinacy, they neither impugn the sobriety of his judgment, where perhaps he himself appears most enthusiastic, nor can they dim the lustre of that benignity of mind which ensured to every inquirer patient attention and sympathizing

counsel; forbearance with their weaknesses, and yet respect for their sincerity.

Another false impression which is conveyed by the Biographer's remarks on "the extravagancies of the Methodists" is, that great importance was attached by Mr. Wesley to those emotions, and bodily affections, which occasionally occurred; and that the most visionary persons, and those who pretended extacies, dreams, &c. were, at least in the early part of his ministry, the objects of his special respect, as eminently holy and favoured persons. This is so far from the fact, that it is difficult to meet with a divine whose views of religion are more practical and defined. He did not deny that occasionally "God," even now, "speaketh in a dream, in a vision of the night," and that he may thus "open the ears of men to instruction, and command them to depart from iniquity;" that, in point of fact, many indisputable cases of this kind have occurred in modern times; and in this belief he agreed with many of the wisest and the best of men. He has recorded some cases of what may be called extacy, generally without an opinion of his own, leaving every one to form his own judgment from the recorded fact. He unquestionably believed in special effusions of the influence of the Holy Spirit upon congregations and individuals, producing powerful emotions of mind, expressed in some instances by bodily affections: and he has furnished some facts on which Mr. Southey has exercised his philosophy, probably, with a success more satisfactory to himself, than convincing to his readers. But that any thing extraordinary, either of bodily

or mental affection, was with him, *at any time* of his life, of itself, deemed so important as to be regarded as a mark of superior piety, is a most unfounded assumption. Those of his Sermons, and his Notes on the New Testament, which contain the doctrines which he deemed essential; and the Rules by which every member of his societies was required to be governed, are sufficiently in refutation of this notion. In them no reference is made to any thing visionary as a part, however small, of true religion; except the whole of a spiritual religion changing the heart, and sanctifying the affections, be thought visionary. The rule of admission into his societies was of the most practical nature, "a desire to fly from the wrath to come," the sincerity of which was to be determined by corresponding fruits in the conduct; and on this condition only, further explained by detailed regulations, all of them simple and practical, were his members to remain in connection with him. These rules remain in force to this day, and are the standing evidence that, from the first formation of the Methodist Societies, neither a speculative, nor a visionary scheme of religion was the basis of their union. Had Mr. Wesley placed religion, in the least, in those circumstances which make so conspicuous a figure in Mr. Southey's pages, he would have given us a very different standard of doctrine in his sermons; and the rules of his societies would have borne an equivocal and mystic character. Mr. Southey, who has qualified himself for some of his poems by the legendary lore of the Romish Church, is fond of tracing comparisons between the

extravagancies of the Catholic saints and the Methodists. All is not evil in the Papal Church, though all is more or less corrupted. The greatest religious errors usually rest upon some truth ; and the greater the error, the more important is the truth on which it leans for authority. It does not, however, certainly follow, that they who hold a truth in common with those who hold it erroneously, or in a corrupted and extravagant form, must also hold it erroneously and extravagantly ; and yet this is often an absurdity into which Mr. Southey falls when he is taught by a book, refuted long ago, to compare “the enthusiasm of the Methodists and Papists.” This is the usual effect of analogical reasoning, when the things compared are but half understood. The Romanists have in all ages had their devotees, and extatics, and rapturists ; *as such*, they were held up to peculiar respect and veneration : and the temptation to imitation and deception, therefore, was strong in proportion to the estimation in which such fervours were held, and the consideration to which they entitled the subjects of them. Had a great number of persons, making such pretensions, ever appeared among the Methodists, the parallel between us and the Catholics would not even then have been just ; for visionaries have no eminence of consideration among us, nor ever had. But the number has been few, and seldom have they remained long : the rule of judgment as to our members, having from the beginning been “*faith, which worketh by love.*” Even those whose conversion has been accompanied with circumstances somewhat extraordinary, receive no peculiar

respect, and are entitled to no office, on that account. A steady, fervent, habitual, and practical piety, is now, as in the days of Mr. Wesley, the only standard by which the professions of our members are estimated.

These observations may be sufficient to show, that the manner in which Mr. Southey has stated what he calls the “extravagancies” of the Methodists is unfair, and calculated to make a false impression; the *use* he makes of these circumstances comes next in order,—*they were decided indications of enthusiasm.*

In *some cases* they were; and had this been the inference, Mr. Southey’s opinion would have remained unmolested. But into this conclusion, not only are several extraordinary cases of irregularity and exuberant feeling pressed, but all those instances in which Mr. Wesley’s congregations were powerfully affected under his sermons, and where individuals were brought into strong distress of spirit on account of their sinfulness, who afterwards attained an inward peace, in the full persuasion that through the merits of Christ they were forgiven. Mr. Southey would have been much better entitled to the praise of a fair and candid reasoner, on the principles of Scripture, had he exercised as to these facts some discrimination. He would then have said; here are effects, which, whatever may be thought of the manner in which they were produced, are clearly proved by their fruits to be genuine; here are others which may be called hopeful; others suspicious; others deceptive. Any difference of opinion which remained as to particular

cases, or the proportion to be assigned to each class, might then have been easily settled. Mr. Wesley did not believe that all who were affected by his ministry were converted: nor that all presented an equally hopeful character: but he knew, by their subsequent conduct, that great numbers were enlightened and sanctified by the truth of the Gospel; and among them many in whom those strong emotions had been excited which our author considers so fatally indicative of "the high fever of enthusiasm." Many good effects are indeed acknowledged by the Author; and yet good, bad, and doubtful are resolved into enthusiasm as their common and philosophic cause. Thus has he gone much beyond all his predecessors in puzzling and confounding a term, before sufficiently equivocal, by allowing it to have effected, in many instances, a moral and a "permanent benefit," and in assigning to enthusiasm the office which has been usually attributed exclusively to true religion. How he will settle this point, both with his Christian and his infidel friends, cannot well be conjectured. The former may well suspect that he considers all religion as a modification of enthusiasm; the other will probably object that his Christianity, small as is its degree, has somewhat darkened the light of his philosophy; and that he has conceded what will prove religious enthusiasm to be a better and a more efficient principle than a *true philosopher* ought to have allowed.

The effects produced by the ministry of the Wesleys, Mr. Whitefield, and others, in different parts of the country, are stated also as though they

presented cases entirely new and peculiar. Here is another error. For though the effects were so extraordinary, that many thousands in the course of a few years, and of those too who had lived in the greatest unconcern as to spiritual things, and were most ignorant and depraved in their habits, were recovered from their vices, and the moral appearance of whole neighbourhoods changed, yet the effects were neither new in themselves, nor even in those circumstances which Mr. Southey thinks most singular and exceptionable. He was too little acquainted with Ecclesiastical History to correct himself on this point; or he has given his attention only to the *politics* of the professed Church of Christ in different ages; the story rather of its worldly contests, than of its contests with the world; or he would have known that great and rapid effects of this kind, as well as in nominal triumphs, were produced in the first ages of Christianity; and that not without "outries," and strong corporal as well as mental emotions, nay, and extravagancies too, and, by perversion, condemnable heresies, and a rank and real enthusiasm. Would he from this argue against Christianity itself; or asperse the labours and characters of those holy men who planted its genuine root in Asia, Africa, and Europe; and say, that because, through the corrupt nature of men, evil often accompanies good, one is to be confounded with the other, and that they were the authors of the evil because they were the instruments of the good? Had Mr. Southey known the best part of the history of Christianity, he would have recollect'd, that, upon the decline

of true piety in that part of the Church of Christ, which occupies, unfortunately, for the instruction of mankind, the most conspicuous place in its annals, there were not wanting holy and zealous ministers to carry out the tidings of salvation to the barbarous ancestors of European nations, and that strong and effectual impressions were made by their faithful and powerful preaching upon the savage multitudes who surrounded them, accompanied with many effects similar to those which attended the preaching of the Wesleys and Whitefield ; for all who went on these sacred missions were not enthusiasts, nor were all the conversions effected by them a mere exchange of superstitions. He would have known, that similar effects accompanied the preaching of many eminent men at the Reformation ; and that many of the Puritan ministers had similar successes in large districts in our own country. I as much differ from the politics of some of these divines as Mr. Southey ; but I envy not the mind which can forget, in this consideration, their elevated piety, their vast theological acquirements, their laborious occupancy of time, and that "fruitful preaching," to use the expressive phrase of the day, which filled their parishes with a light and truth which, had not the violence of political parties on both sides served by different processes to extinguish, would probably have left the founders of Methodism a much narrower sphere of action. He would have known that, in Scotland, similar effects had been produced by the ministry of faithful men, attended by very similar circumstances ; and also among the grave Presbyterians of New England, previous to the rise

of Methodism; and he would have been informed, that, though on a smaller scale, the same results have followed the ministry of modern Missionaries of *different* religious Societies in *different* parts of the world. The circumstances on which Mr. Southey dwells, though extraordinary, were not, therefore, as he represents them, either new or peculiar to Methodism; and his method of accounting for them must take a wider range to meet all the cases to which we have adverted. It may be laid down as a principle established by fact, that, whenever a zealous and faithful ministry is raised up, after a long spiritual dearth, the early effects of that ministry, are not only powerful, but often attended with extraordinary circumstances ; nor are such extraordinary circumstances extravagancies, because they are not common.

There is a doctrine of Scripture of which Mr. Southey has probably never heard, but it may, perhaps, better explain these phenomena than the absurdities which he adopts ; and though, of course, I must be numbered with enthusiasts in his estimation, it will not cost me much anxiety to venture to offer it as a much better solution than any which his work contains. If there be a truth in Scripture explicit and decided, it is this, that the success of the ministry of the Gospel, in the conversion of men, is the consequence of Divine influence ; and if there be a well-ascertained fact in ecclesiastical story, it is, that no great and indisputable results of this kind have been produced but by men who have acknowledged this truth, and have gone forth in humble

dependance upon that promised co-operation contained in the words, " And lo I am with you always, even to the end of the world." This fact, equally striking and notorious, is a strong confirmation that the sense of the Sacred Oracles on this point was not mistaken by them. The testimony of the word of God is, that, as to ministerial success, " God giveth the increase ;" the testimony of experience is, that no success in producing true conversion has ever taken place in any church, but when this co-operation of God has been acknowledged and sought by the agents employed in it.

The doctrine of Divine influence, as necessary to the conversion of men, being thus grounded on the evidence of Scripture, and further confirmed by the fact, it may follow, and that in perfect conformity with revelation, that such influences may be dispensed in different degrees at different periods. That they were more eminently given at the first establishment of Christianity than at some future periods, is certain ; and not only in extraordinary gifts, (for though those might awaken attention and silence unbelief, we have the evidence of Scripture history to prove, that miracles cannot of themselves convert men from vice;) but in sanctifying influence, without which the heart is never brought to yield to the authority and will of God in its choice and affections. That in various subsequent periods there have been special dispensations of favour to nations, with reference to the improvement of their moral state, is clear from a fact which cannot be denied, that eminently holy and gifted men have been

raised up at such periods for the benefits of the countries and the age in which they appeared, from whose exertions those countries have derived the highest moral advantages. For reasons before given, we do not refer the appearance of such men to chance, nor the formation of their characters to the circumstances and spirit of "stirring times." We leave these conclusions to the godless philosophy of Mr. Southey; and recognize in the appearance of such instruments, the merciful designs and special grace of Him, "who worketh all and in all." But the argument is, that if such men have really been the agents in "turning many to righteousness," and that the principles of our religion forbid us to conclude that this can be done by any gifts or qualities in the agents, however lofty; then, according to the Scripture doctrine, they were "workers together with God," and the age in which they laboured was distinguished by larger effusions of the Holy Spirit upon the minds of men. Why this should occur at one time more eminently than at another, we pretend not to say: but even this notion, so enthusiastic probably to Mr. Southey, is still in the spirit of Scripture, which declares that "the wind bloweth where it listeth," and that the Holy Spirit, like the atmosphere, is subject to laws not ascertainable by man; and if this effusion of his influence argue especial, though undeserved favour to particular nations and ages, this is not more difficult to account for than that, at some periods and places, men of eminent usefulness should be sent into the world, when they do not appear in others, which being a mere matter of fact, leaves no room for cavil. This view, likewise,

accords with what the Scriptures teach us to expect as to the future. To the glorious views unfolded by the sure word of prophecy, Mr. Southey, it may be feared, has but seldom turned, and but superficially considered. But serious Christians have been animated in their efforts for the extension of religion, by believing them to be connected with that great administration of the affairs of this world by the Redeemer God, which is to issue in the abolition of crimes, and the restoration of the whole earth to righteousness. For the full accomplishment of this sublime consummation of the Divine counsels, agents of great efficiency and qualifications, they believe, will from time to time appear; but their hope does not rest on them, but on Him only who has explicitly promised to "pour out his Spirit upon all flesh," at once to give efficiency to instruments in themselves feeble, however gifted, and "to order the unruly wills and passions of men," that they may be subdued and sanctified by the truth. If such effusions of Divine influence are looked for, and on such principles, as the means of spreading the power of Christianity generally, we may surely believe it quite accordant both with the spirit and letter of Scripture, that the same influence should often be exerted to preserve and to revive religion; and that if nations, already Christian, are to be the instruments of extending Christianity, not in name only, but in its spirit and sanctity, into all the earth, they should be prepared for this high designation by the special exercise of the same agency, turning them from what is merely formal in religion, to its realities, and making them examples to

others of the purifying grace of the Gospel of God our Saviour. Let it then be supposed, (no great presumption, indeed,) that Christians have quite as good a foundation for these opinions as Mr. Southey can boast for that paltry philosophy by which he would explain the effects produced by the preaching of holy and zealous ministers in different ages ; and we may conclude that such effects, as far as they were genuine, were the result of Divine influence ; and when numerous and rapid, of a Divine influence specially and eminently exerted, giving more than ordinary assistance to the minds of men in their religious concerns, and rendering the obstinate more inexcusable by louder and more explicit calls. Of the extraordinary circumstances which have usually accompanied such visitations, it may be said, that if some should be resolved into purely natural causes, some into real enthusiasm, and, (with Mr. Southey's leave,) others into satanic imitation, a sufficient number will remain, which only can be explained by considering them as results of that strong impression made upon the consciences and affections of men by an influence ascertained to be Divine, though, usually, exerted through human instrumentality, by its unquestionable effects upon the heart and life. Nor is it either irrational or unscriptural to suppose, that times of great national darkness and depravity, the case certainly of this country at the outset of Mr. Wesley and his colleagues in their glorious career, should require a strong remedy ; and that the attention of a sleeping world should be roused by circumstances which could not fail to be noticed by the most

unthinking. We do not attach primary importance to secondary circumstances ; but they are not to be wholly disregarded. The Lord was not in the wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in the “ still small voice ;” yet that “ still small voice ” might not have been heard, except by minds roused from their inattention by the shaking of the earth, and the sounding of the storm.

If, however, no special and peculiar exertion of Divine influence on the minds of many of Mr. Wesley’s hearers be supposed ; were we only to assume that *ordinary influence* which, as we have seen, must accompany the labours of every minister of Christ to render them successful in saving men, the strong emotions often produced by the preaching of the founder of Methodism might be accounted for on principles very different from those adopted by Mr. Southey. The multitudes to whom he preached were generally grossly ignorant of the gospel. He poured upon their minds a flood of light : his discourses were plain, pointed, earnest, and affectionate. The feeling produced was deep, piercing, and in numberless cases genuine ; such as we have no right, if we believe the Bible, to attribute to any other cause than that inward operation of God with his truth which alone can render human means effectual. Many of those on whom such impressions were made, retired in silence, and nurtured them by reflection. The stricken deer hastened into solitude, there to bleed, unobserved by all but God. This was the case with the majority ; for those visible and strong emotions which Mr. Southey has made so prominent in his work, were the occasional, and not the

constant results. At some seasons effects were produced which, on Christian principles, I hesitate not to say, can only be accounted for on the assumption that the influence was both Divine and special; at others the impression was great; but yet we need assume nothing more than the ordinary blessing of God which accompanies "the word of his grace," when delivered in the fulness of faith and love, in order to account for it. But beside those who were silently pierced, and whose minds were sufficiently strong to command their emotions, there were often many of a class not accustomed to put such restraints upon themselves. To a powerful feeling they offered but a slight resistance, and it became visible. To many people, then, as now, this would appear extravagant; but on what principle can the genuineness of the impression be questioned? Only if no subsequent fruit appeared. But if a true conversion followed, then, if there be truth in religion itself, the "finger of God" must be acknowledged.

This is the philosophy which *we* apply to the matter at issue; let me now turn to that of Mr. Southey. His great principle of solution, is the occurrence of "a new disease" which disposed its subjects to religious impressions, and was withal *infectious*; a disease which had its *commencement* and its "*crisis*," but as to its termination, whether in cure or mortality, we have no information. The commencement was an "extravagant opinion, as to human corruption, throwing the patient into distress, and sometimes horror;" the "*crisis*" was the profession of having obtained forgiveness of sins through the merits of Christ. But what followed upon this crisis?

Mr. Southey is very cautious not to describe the future effects, as being probably aware, that were he to proceed to the consequent holy lives, and peaceful deaths of many of the patients, the “*new disease*” would have too much the appearance of “saving health,” to support his theory. I shall not exhaust the patience of the reader, by attempting an exposure of this folly, which only affords another instance to prove how much faith it requires to constitute an unbeliever. But the absurdity, great as it is, is important, first, as it shows that the case was become too hard for the solvents which Mr. Southey at first applied to it,—the eloquence of Mr. Whitefield, the address, and landscape preaching of Mr. Wesley; and, secondly, that his researches into the History of Methodism presented to him facts so extraordinary, that he felt that no ordinary cause could satisfactorily account for them. How difficult is it for minds inflated by a conceited science to acknowledge God! Here is a case extraordinary indeed; but still extraordinary only in extent, not in principle; a case of the conversion of many thousands of persons from the “error of their ways,” and which Mr. Southey acknowledges to have been a “change operated in their moral habits and principles; and yet he gravely looks his readers in the face, as though confident of receiving the full meed of praise for the discovery, and refers the whole to the occurrence of *a new bodily disease.* (8) —

(8) Mr. Southey’s solution of difficult and extraordinary cases, on which we should be content to avoid giving an opinion, either way, is sometimes even more curious. In mentioning a singular effect

Further comment upon this would be trifling; but, before I leave the subject of enthusiasm, I will inform Mr. Southey, that we believe, as truly as he himself, that there is a real enthusiasm in religion, though we may not agree with him in the application of the term. We do not think so well of enthusiasm as to believe, with him, that it can originate a moral good to individuals, and much less change the moral aspect of a nation. We do not think the "*sighings of a contrite heart*" an indication of enthusiasm, nor yet the confidence, and joy, and hope of a believer. We do not think him an enthusiast, who is ardent in his devotions; exact, or even scrupulous in his conduct; and tenderly concerned for the salvation of his neighbour. But we should think him an enthusiast, who professed any other rule of action than the word of God, soberly interpreted; and he would find no countenance among us. We should think him an enthusiast who, under notions of self-sufficiency and high spirituality, should consider himself independent of the reading of the Scriptures, the instructions of the ministry, and the public and private means of grace, for support and counsel; and such a person could not obtain admission into our Societies, the rules of which would

produced on the Rev. W. Grimshaw at the time of his conversion, which appeared to him to proceed from flashes of light, our Philosopher discovers that Mr. G. had his face at the time towards a pewter shelf; and then, in the true spirit of discovery, represents the effect to have been *galvanic!* Pity but this blunt honest clergyman had been as expert as Mr. Southey in tracing effects to their true causes. Galvanism might then have been discovered, and Grimshaw have robbed Galvani and Italy of the honour.

in limine oppose his introduction. We should think him an enthusiast who, under an impression of his own high religious attainments, should fancy himself authorized to censure and speak evil of others ; for we judge that true “ charity is not puffed up,” and “ vaunteth not itself,” and that where humility and meekness are wanting, there are no evidences of real piety. We should think him an enthusiast, most dangerous and unfit for a religious society, who, under pretence of religious impressions on his own mind, should neglect or violate any of the social or domestic duties ; because we regard the moral precepts of the Gospel as of equal authority with its promises, and teach that “ faith without works is dead;” and unsaving. Lastly, we should think that man an enthusiast, who attached greater importance to any religious feeling, or any extraordinary circumstance of his conversion, as an indication of his spiritual state, than to the unequivocal rule of conformity in spirit, temper, and conduct to the Gospel. When instances of this kind have occurred, and occur they will in all religious societies among the uninstructed, and the ardent, they have uniformly been taught a very different doctrine ; and finding nothing valued among us but what is tangible and practical ; that no inward feeling is allowed to be genuine, but that which expresses itself by, “ gentleness, goodness, meekness, faith, temperance;” they have either been cured of their follies, if truly sincere, though mistaken, or have at length grown weary of the discipline of opinions opposite to their own, and so have left us. Nor must Mr. Southey attribute this to our recent improvement as a body in sobriety and

decorum, at which he is kind enough to hint; for we do not accept the compliment. We were thus instructed from the beginning; and no where can we find such views more clearly stated, or more strongly enforced, than in the writings of Mr. Wesley. In illustration of this I subjoin, in the note below, a passage from his sermon "On Enthusiasm." (9)

(9) "There are innumerable kinds of enthusiasm. Those which are most common, and for that reason most dangerous, I shall endeavour to reduce under a few general heads, that they may more easily be understood and avoided.

"The first sort of enthusiasm which I shall mention, is that of those who imagine they have the *grace* which they have not. Thus some imagine, when it is not so, that they have *redemption* through Christ, 'even the *forgiveness* of sins.' These are usually such as 'have no root in themselves;' no deep repentance, or thorough conviction. 'Therefore, they receive the word with joy.' And 'because they have no deepness of earth,' no deep work in their heart, therefore, the seed 'immediately springs up.' There is immediately a superficial change, which, together with that light joy, striking in with the pride of their unbroken heart, and with their inordinate self-love, easily persuades them, they have already 'tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come.'

"A second sort of enthusiasm, is that of those, who imagine they have such *gifts* from God as they have not. Thus some have imagined themselves to be endued with a power of working miracles, of healing the sick by a word or a touch, of restoring sight to the blind; yea, even of raising the dead, a notorious instance of which is still alive in our own history. Others have undertaken to prophesy, to foretel things to come, and that with the utmost certainty and exactness. But a little time usually convinces these enthusiasts. When plain facts run counter to their predictions, experience performs what reason could not, and sinks them down into their senses.

"To the same class belong those, who, in preaching or prayer, imagine themselves to be so influenced by the Spirit of God, as in fact, they are not. I am sensible, indeed, that without him we can do nothing; more especially in our public ministry: that all our preaching is utterly vain, unless it be attended with his power: and

From what has been said on this subject, it will appear, that Mr. Southey has no explicit conception

all our prayer, unless his Spirit therein help our infirmities. I know, if we do not both preach and pray by the Spirit, it is all but lost labour: seeing the help that is done upon earth, he doth it himself, who worketh all in all. But this does not affect the case before us. Though there is a real influence of the Spirit of God, there is also an imaginary one; and many there are who mistake the one for the other. Many suppose themselves to be under that influence, when they are not, when it is far from them. And many others suppose they are more under that influence than they really are. Of this number, I fear, are all who imagine, that God dictates the very words they speak: and that, consequently, it is impossible they should speak any thing amiss, either as to the matter or manner of it. It is well known how many enthusiasts, of this sort also, have appeared during the present century: some of whom speak in a far more authoritative manner, than either St. Paul, or any of the Apostles.

"The same sort of enthusiasm, though in a lower degree, is frequently found in men of private character. They may likewise imagine themselves to be influenced or directed by the Spirit, when they are not. I allow, 'if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his:' and that if we either think, speak, or act aright, it is through the assistance of that blessed Spirit. But how many impute to him, or expect things from him, without any rational or scriptural ground? Such are they who imagine, they either do or shall receive particular *directions* from God, not merely in things of importance, but in things of no moment, in the most trifling circumstances of life. Whereas in these cases God has given us our reason for a guide: though never excluding the secret assistance of his Spirit.

"To this kind of enthusiasm they are peculiarly exposed, who expect to be directed of God, either in spiritual things or in common life, in what is justly called, an *extraordinary* manner. I mean, by visions or dreams, by strong impressions, or impulses on the mind. I do not deny, that God has, of old times, manifested his will in this manner. Or that he can do so now. Nay, I believe he does, in some very rare instances. But how frequently do men mistake therein! How are they misled by pride and a warm imagination, to ascribe such impulses or impressions, dreams or visions, to God, as are utterly unworthy of him! Now this is all pure enthusiasm, as wide of religion as it is of truth and soberness.

"Perhaps some may ask, 'Ought we not then to enquire, What

of religious enthusiasm. By no writer has the term been used so vaguely ; and yet, without any attempt

is the will of God in all things ? And ought not his will to be the rule of our practice ? Unquestionably it ought. But how is a sober Christian to make this enquiry ? To know what is the will of God ? Not by waiting for supernatural dreams. Not by expecting God to reveal it in visions. Not by looking for any *particular impressions*, or sudden impulses on his mind. No : but by consulting the Oracles of God. ‘ To the law and to the testimony.’ This is the general method of knowing what is ‘ the holy and acceptable will of God.’

“ ‘ But how shall I know what is the will of God, in such and such a particular case ? The thing proposed is, in itself, of an indifferent nature, and so left undetermined in Scripture.’ I answer, the Scripture itself gives you a general rule, applicable to all particular cases. ‘ The will of God is our sanctification.’ It is his will that we should be inwardly and outwardly holy : that we should be good, and do good in every kind, and in the highest degree whereof we are capable. This is as clear as the shining of the sun. In order, therefore, to know, what is the will of God in a particular case, we have only to apply this general rule.

“ A third very common sort of enthusiasm (if it does not coincide with the former,) is, that of those who think to attain the end without using the means, by the immediate power of God. If, indeed, those means were providentially withheld, they would not fall under this charge. God can, and sometimes does, in cases of this nature, exert his own immediate power. But they who expect this when they have those means, and will not use them, are proper enthusiasts. Such are they who expect to understand the Holy Scriptures, without reading them, and meditating thereon: yea, without using all such helps as are in their power, and may probably conduce to that end. Such are they who designedly speak in the public assembly, without any premeditation. I say designedly ; because there may be such circumstances as, at some times, make it unavoidable. But whoever despises that great mean of speaking profitably, is so far an enthusiast.

“ Against every sort of this, it behoves us to guard, with the utmost diligence: considering the dreadful effects it has so often produced, and which, indeed, naturally result from it. Its immediate offspring is pride ; it continually increases this source from whence it flows, and hereby it alienates us, more and more, from the favour and from the life of God. It dries up the very springs of faith and love ; of

to fix its meaning in his own mind, he has charged it, sometimes in a mitigated, but often in the vulgar sense, upon Mr. Wesley and his followers. If, indeed, he think it enthusiastic in us to hold that religion has its seat in the heart, and must awaken its emotions, we neither deny the charge, nor are ashamed of it. We believe that no man can repent without sorrow, believe without joy, or

righteousness and true holiness. Seeing all these flow from grace. But ‘God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace only to the humble.’

“ Together with pride there will naturally arise an unadvisable and unconvincible spirit. So that into whatever error or fault the enthusiast falls, there is small hope of his recovery. For reason will have little weight with him (as has been frequently and justly observed,) who imagines he is led by a higher guide, by the immediate wisdom of God. And as he grows in pride, so he must grow in unadvisableness and stubbornness also. He must be less and less capable of being convinced, less susceptible of persuasion; more and more attached to his own judgment and his own will, till he be altogether fixed and immovable.”

The above extracts will, I think, sufficiently shew, that Mr. Wesley was not an encourager of real enthusiasm. There is a passage in the same sermon, which I commend to Mr. Southey’s consideration, for his personal edification.

“ If enthusiasm be a term, though so frequently used, yet so rarely understood, take you care, not to talk of you know not what; not to use the word, till you understand it. As in all other points, so likewise in this, learn to think before you speak. First, know the meaning of this hard word; and then use it, if need require.

“ But if so few, even among men of education and learning, much more among the common sort of men, understand this dark, ambiguous word, or have any fixed notion of what it means: then, secondly, beware of judging or calling any man an enthusiast upon common report. This is by no means a sufficient ground, for giving any name of reproach to any man: least of all is it a sufficient ground for so black a term of reproach as this. The more evil it contains, the more cautious you should be how you apply it to any one: to bring so heavy an accusation without proof, being neither consistent with justice nor mercy.”

pray in the true spirit of devotion without obtaining inward support and consolation. We think that such " a peace as the world cannot give" is attainable by good men ; and that there is a real communion of the spirit with God. That sanctification is the work of the Holy Ghost in the heart, carried on by the serious diligent use of divinely authorised means. That it becomes persons in a state of probation to be serious and watchful ; and that they who are approaching an eternal world, ought to be solemnly, though not gloomily, impressed by that circumstance. All this we acknowledge ; but we can perceive nothing here which makes a substantial difference between us and all true Christians in every age of the church ; nothing, but what all the Churches of Christ throughout the world have, in one mode or other, recognized as parts of their own faith. But if Mr. Southey supposes that we attach an undue importance to impressions, the answer I have already given : he knows us not, he knows little of the writings of Mr. Wesley. In them the religion of the heart is inculcated ; but it is never placed in feelings for which no scriptural account can be given as to their origin, or which are unconnected with the Christian temper and practice as their end. There is nothing imaginative in their style; nothing calculated to move the passions through the fancy ; nothing gorgeous ; nothing mystic. They are addressed to the conscience, not to the imagination ; and they inculcate a spiritual religion only as it consists in holiness, and connects itself with every thing " honest, lovely, and of good report," in life. This was the character of Mr. Wesley's *viva voce* sermons, and it is that of his written ones. This was

the method of preaching he enjoined upon his coadjutors ; and upon that model has the ministry among the Methodists been generally formed. It is not denied that there have been exceptions ; that instances of a real enthusiasm have recurred in some weak-minded persons ; that some among us have occasionally given too great an encouragement to noise and clamour in their religious meetings, and laid too much stress upon the excitement of the passions ; that wrong views have thus been sometimes communicated to persons in the early stages of their religious experience ; and that a real work of God has in some cases been injured ; on the one hand, by too great a severity to the circumstances accompanying it ; and on the other, by too great an indulgence of them. It costs us nothing to make this concession. No one who has paid adequate attention to religious subjects can be ignorant, that in the experience of a religious society, as well as in that of a religious individual, a warfare with evils of various kinds is often called forth by human liability to evil. All great virtues run by the side of great infirmities ; and the avoiding of one extreme tends, in all cases, to the other. In churches, prudence and caution are apt to degenerate into coldness and formality ; fervid piety and zeal into exuberance of feeling and pride, and it has been so in all ages. It is a sufficient answer to Mr. Southey's insinuations as to ourselves, that the "golden mean" has been much seldom departed from by us than he was either aware of, or willing to admit ; and that, as a *religious body*, we have never countenanced such aberrations from it, as, in accordance with the principles of all Protestant

churches, might be justly deemed enthusiastic. They have been of infrequent occurrence, and confined to few individuals, whilst all the allowed principles of the body, and its public acts, have been opposed to them. The contrary impression made by Mr. Southey's book we willingly attribute to his ignorance of our views and conduct, and to a theological system exceedingly crude, in some instances false, in others greatly defective. Had Mr. Southey better studied religion, and its history, he would have better qualified himself to give the History of Methodism, and its Founder. (1)

(1) To confirm what I have stated above, that the extraordinary effects produced in the early periods of Methodism by the ministry of Messrs. Wesleys, Mr. Whitefield, and others, and which indeed occasionally occur to this day, were not what Mr. Southey and others represent them, entire *novelties*; that the "disease," as our author will have it, under the influence of which sudden and strong religious emotions were produced, was not so "*new*" as he supposes it; that, upon what the best of men, and the most competent divines have considered, and called, special effusions of Divine influence upon particular places at different times, many have been suddenly brought under the power of religion, and that whole neighbourhoods have thus rapidly changed their character and moral aspect, I shall give several instances. It will be seen, that they bear a strong resemblance to the work effected by the ministry of the founders of Methodism. The visitations too were often sudden; they occurred after long spiritual dearth; the emotions produced were strong, and often very visible; and the regular order of religious assemblies was also occasionally interrupted. Mr. Southey will perceive that his manner of solving the phenomena, by assuming the appearance of a *new and specific disease*, has no claim to originality; that the philosophers, both of Scotland and of New England, made the discovery long before he was born, or even Methodism known; and that he has formed his theory with but a very partial acquaintance with the facts for which it is to account. It will not fail to strike the serious and considerate, in comparing these accounts with the narrative of what Mr. Southey has called the "extravagancies" of the Methodists, that in all the instances adduced, the effects followed the

§ 7. Separation from the Church.

Mr. Wesley's clerical irregularity, and the tendency of his system to separation from the Church

ministry of men of eminent piety, and the preaching of the great doctrines of the Reformation ; that the affections excited arose from the same principles and considerations ; that the sorrow was sorrow for sin, that the joy was the joy of reconciliation with God, and that in the whole, whatever instruments were employed, the recognized agent was the Spirit of God :—that immoralities were renounced, neglected ordinances frequented, and that the majority in every case gave evidence in future life of the reality of the moral change effected in them. Some extravagancies, and some irregularities are adverted to in those accounts, which, like those occasionally occurring in Methodism, were partly avoidable, and partly unavoidable. For noise and disorder, I am far from being an advocate, but in none of these cases does their occasional occurrence prove that an extraordinary work in the hearts of men was not then carrying on by the Spirit of God. By the exercise of a firm discipline, then most of all to be exerted, they are to be, as far as possible, repressed, for the power of the work does not lie in them; and yet discipline, though firm, ought to be discriminating, for the sake of that real blessing with which at such seasons God is crowning the administration of his truth. It is a subject of little importance how the sophists of the world, or merely nominal Christians may regard these accounts. Under any form in which it can be presented to them, the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart will be an object of their hostility and contempt. But to those who believe that all means used for the conversion of men, depend entirely for their efficacy upon divine influences ; who think themselves warranted from Scripture to conclude that these influences are sometimes vouchsafed in extraordinary degrees of efficacy ; and that such effusions will distinguish the latter day, and be the great means of hastening its glories, these notices of “the days of the right hand of the Most High,” “days of his power,” “days of the Son of Man,” are at once supporting, encouraging, and instructive. In these doctrines, and in these facts, real Christians, of all professions, are deeply interested. Ought they not earnestly to pray for that influence from God, in which they all trust, more abundantly

of England, are subjects frequently adverted to by Mr. Southey. On these points the Biographer has,

to accompany the word of his grace, and especially in times of daring wickedness and infidelity like the present, when so many agents are at work for evil, without assuming to prescribe in what manner their prayers shall be answered? It is granted, that in all such seasons of powerful operation, enthusiasm, real enthusiasm has, in a few cases, sprung up. So it was in New England, during that extraordinary work, of which President Edwards published a narrative. How did that great divine (for so he was, whatever may be thought of his theological metaphysics, or his Calvinistic tenets,) act? He scrutinized the cases, and wrote his able book on "The Religious Affections," not to discourage what he knew, and had proved from its result to be the work of God; but to guard and cherish it. Enthusiasm springs from excess, and not defect; and where there is most of active and ardent piety, it will most frequently be produced in individuals of weak understanding, and sanguine feelings, not to mention the imitations of hypocrisy; and this has been the case in all the *best* periods of the Church of Christ. The worst effect of this has been to put ministers *too much* upon their guard against enthusiasm; so that both the genuine work of God, and the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit in his operations, have often been undervalued. My humble opinion is, however enthusiastic I may be deemed, that in this country we have little to fear from enthusiasm. Our dangers lurk elsewhere. Enthusiasm is chiefly dangerous, when the Scriptures and religious truth are but little known, and religious discipline in churches but imperfectly organized. In this country, where the Bible is so extensively circulated, evangelical principles so generally implanted in the minds of men, and the apparatus of a regular and numerous ministry in all religious communities provided, every thing is under control; and what the cause of religion appears most to want, is the "*power from on high.*" Why should not all who love Zion, and their country with the best kind of patriotic attachment, pray for this, and wait the answer to their prayers—"until the Spirit be poured from on high, and the wilderness become a fruitful field." "If," says Dr. Gillies, a most respectable Scotch divine, from whose 'Historical Collections' most of the accounts I have adverted to will be taken, "before these late gracious visitations, prayer for such blessings was so much neglected that in some respects it may be said, the Lord was found of people who sought him not, and did wonderful things which they looked not for, may it not be hoped, if we seek his face, and that with all

however, discovered much more fairness than is usual with the assailants of Methodism. Full justice, indeed, is not done to Mr. Wesley's motives, for they were not fully within Mr. Southey's comprehension, and remarks occasionally occur, which might well have been spared; but our Author has more than once made a concession which greatly narrows the ground of debate on this subject.

It has been usual for writers of Mr. Southey's class, to represent Mr. Wesley as having early formed the project of making himself the head of a sect; and to consider every part of his conduct as regulated by a pre-conceived plan of ultimate separation from the Church. Were this established, it would be difficult to reconcile many of his proceedings with strict sincerity, and his character must consequently have suffered. This opinion is, however, entirely unsupported; and so strong, indeed, is the contrary evidence, that those who have most violently assaulted Mr. Wesley on this ground, must have been wholly unacquainted with his history, or too bigotted to read it with impartiality. Mr. Southey, indeed, in his sketch of the Life and Character of Mr. Wesley, in "The Correspondent" for 1817, appears hastily to have given sanction to this opinion; but whether from the instruction he derived from a review of that article in the **Methodist Magazine**, or that his researches have since been

our heart, we shall find that we seek not his face in vain, and that he never was, and never will be, 'a barren wilderness, nor a land of darkness,' to them that look for him?"

As the extracts I have referred to would swell this note to too great a length, they are inserted in an *Appendix*.

more careful, he now yields to the truth of the case, and admits, that though the measures Mr. Wesley adopted *tended* to a separation from the Church, they were taken by him “in good faith;” that they arose out of “the circumstances in which he was placed, one step bringing on another;” and that in the outset of his career, he had no intention of placing himself in opposition to the Church of England. This concession renders it unnecessary to go into a defence of the *sincerity* of Mr. Wesley’s attachment to the Church ; and I shall, therefore, say nothing on this subject, except that that sincerity was sufficiently put to the test. In the Church he met with little but hostility, and even persecution, through a great part of his life ; yet no resentment, which it might be natural sometimes to feel, shook his attachment to her institutions, or abated the earnestness of his prayers for her welfare.

But though Mr. Southey allows that the measures of Mr. Wesley were taken “in good faith,” he contends that he could not but “*foresee*” that their inevitable tendency was to separation. In order to meet this question, it is necessary to consider Mr. Wesley’s views and circumstances in three marked periods of his public life.

The first period is the commencement of his itinerant ministry at home. Mr. Southey is right in representing it as Mr. Wesley’s object, to revive the spirit of religion in the Church of England. To this he thought himself called, at least by circumstances ; for this he commenced, and continued his labours ; and his ultimate success is a stronger

presumption than any Mr. Southey can bring against it, that he did not mistake his call. We may be thought enthusiastic; but judging from the results pendant upon that determination, we choose rather to explain his not accepting his father's living at Epworth by a providential interposition, than to adopt the solution of his Biographer, who, if Divine interference be omitted, is never at a loss for a reason to supply its place. Mr. Wesley on that occasion was neither indifferent to the opinions of his friends, nor to the "interest of his mother and sisters;" but in no great step does he appear ever to have acted without a clear conviction of duty; and, if Providence designed him to fill a larger sphere than the parish of Epworth, such a conviction in this case was not likely to be permitted. If there be any truth in providential interposition, it is to be looked for precisely in those circumstances in which Mr. Southey seems most anxious to exclude it, the circumstances which form the turning points of our future designation in life.

How far Mr. Wesley's early attempts to do good beyond the sphere of a parish, and to revive scriptural doctrines, and the spirit of piety in the church, of which he was a member and a clergyman, deserve to be referred to "ambition;" "a restless spirit which had not yet found its proper sphere;" a mind not easily brought into subordination to the controul of ecclesiastical discipline; and other similar motives which Mr. Southey either considers as the primary principles under which Mr. Wesley acted, or which he resorts to, in order to qualify and deteriorate those higher motives the existence of which

he cannot deny, is a subject which must be determined by considerations, which, I fear, can have but little weight with our author. They are not, however, on that account to be kept back.

To judge of Mr. Wesley's conduct, we must consider the state of the Church of England, and of the nation, when his public life commenced. That Church was not in its present state of light, and zealous activity. It had not then a ministry so well instructed, nor an equal number of faithful, and truly evangelical clergy. Any standard taken from the present state of the Church, or of the country, to determine the merits of the conduct of a clergyman who should now commence a career as clerically irregular as that of Mr. Wesley would be obviously erroneous, if applied to him. Mr. Southey's 9th chapter has supplied too much information on the state of religion at that period, to render it necessary to go to other authorities, though that were an easy task. He traces the decay of piety in the Church from the time of the Restoration, with a bold but just pencil. He quotes from "the excellent Leighton, who spoke of the Church as a fair carcass without a spirit; in doctrine, in worship, and in the main part of its government, he thought it the best constituted in the world, but one of the most corrupt in its administration;" and from Burnet, who observes, "that in his time, the clergy had less authority, and were under more contempt than those of any church in Europe; for they were much the most remiss in their labours, and the least severe in their lives." Mr. Southey refers also to the importation of "a fashion for the speculative

impiety of France,"—of "a shallow philosophy of home growth," of "the schools of dissent becoming schools of unbelief,"—of the neglect of religious education among the higher classes,—of the greater part of the nation being "totally uneducated,"—of their being "Christians but in name, for the most part in a state of heathen, or worse than heathen ignorance." This was the state in which the Wesleys, and their coadjutors, found the Church and the nation. The British Critic, in its review of Mr. Southey's work, thinks the picture too dark, but is greatly perplexed in its attempt to throw in lighter shades. Dark as Mr. Southey's picture is, it is far from being over-charged. The great evil from which the rest flowed, was the almost total extinction of the doctrines of the Reformation in the pulpit, and in the opinions of the clergy and laity; so that when they were preached by the Wesleys and Whitefield, not only on the authority of the Scriptures, but on that of the formularies of the Church itself, they were regarded as absurd and dangerous novelties. The clergy were generally grossly ignorant of theology; and, though there were splendid exceptions, many who had made it their study were notoriously inclined to heterodoxy on the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith. There was something of ultra Calvinism, and much of frigid unevangelical Arminianism. Natural religion was the great subject of study, when theology was studied at all, and it was made the test and standard of revealed truth. The doctrine of the *opus operatum* of the Papists as to sacraments, lately revived, and too much sanctioned in the

church, was the faith of the divines of the older school ; and a refined system of ethics, unconnected with Christian motives, and disjoined from the vital principles of religion in the heart, the favourite theory of the modern. The body of the clergy neither knew nor cared about systems of any kind. In a great number of instances they were immoral, often grossly so. The populace in large towns were ignorant and profligate ; the inhabitants of villages added to ignorance and profligacy brutish and barbarous manners. A more striking instance of the rapid deterioration of religious light and influence in a country scarcely occurs, than in our own, from the Restoration till the rise of Methodism. It affected not only the Church, but the dissenting sects in no ordinary degree. The Presbyterians had commenced their course through Arianism down to Socinianism ; and those who held the doctrines of Calvin had, in too many instances, by a course of hot-house planting, luxuriated them into the fatal and disgusting errors of Antinomianism. There were exceptions ; but this was the general state of religion and morals in the country, when the Wesleys, Whitefield, and a few kindred spirits came forth, ready to sacrifice ease, reputation, and even life itself, to produce a reformation.

These eminent men had studied the doctrines of the Reformation, and after long and painful conflicts of spirit with the errors of the day, were convinced of their truth. But they saw in them, not merely a theory to be believed, but to be *experienced* and *taught*. They saw and felt the evil of their own

corrupt nature ; they sought and obtained justification through faith in Christ, as taught in the doctrines of their church ; they received a new nature by the influence of the Holy Spirit, “ cleansing the thoughts of their hearts by his inspiration, that they might perfectly love him, and worthily magnify his holy name ;” and then under a solemn sense of their responsibility as persons in holy orders, and in the generous, sympathizing spirit of the grace they had themselves received, they went forth to call men to repentance, and to “ convert them from the error of their ways.” This is a feeling which it may be feared Mr. Southey cannot appreciate ; but the uniform sentiment which springs up in every heart which itself has obtained mercy is a sacred, an unbounded desire to “ *make all men know what is the fellowship of the mystery.* ” Now I ask whether, if we suppose nothing more in the case than the common and ordinary feeling of a minister of the gospel, himself truly converted to the knowledge, faith, and experience of the truth, there was any thing in their refusing to be confined to one parish, when a Church so fallen, and a nation so dark, lay before their eyes, which is not much more charitably and reasonably interpreted, by a wise and holy choice between a narrow and an extended field of usefulness, and especially when the latter presented certain shame and difficulty, than by a gratuitous assumption either of their “ ambition,” or of their “ enthusiasm,” in the sense in which Mr. Southey so generally uses these terms ? But if we go farther, and suppose a Providential designation of these great men to their work, there is nothing

certainly in any received principles of religion among true Christians, to forbid it. Almighty God, who “in wrath remembers mercy,” and grants even to unworthy individuals and nations unmerited visitations of his grace, might have this kind design in view in raising up these extraordinary men at that period. Their gifts, and the very circumstances of their conversion, might be specially designed to qualify them for the office he had appointed them; the events of their lives might be secretly arranged, and controlled with reference to this object, and the “restless stirring” of their spirits, might have a much higher cause than that assigned by Mr. Southey. Certain it is, that he who considers the moral good effected by them as instruments, and recognizes not a Divine agency, is not in a state of mind readily to acknowledge it in any thing; or, under the influence of a purblind philosophy, he greatly errs in his estimate of things great and little, when he sees Providence in the petty revolutions of things merely earthly, and confesses it not in moral revolutions, which in their effects reach to distant climes and ages, and connect themselves with the interests of men in eternity itself.

But to the point in question; at this period Mr. Wesley could have no conviction, that the tendency of his measures was to a separation from the Church. Not conceiving himself bound by his ordination to undertake the cure of a particular parish, a view of the case in which he was confirmed by the Bishop from whom he received orders, he “went forth every where preaching the word;”—in churches, when he had access to them; when they

were closed, "into the highways and hedges," to "compel them to come," not into a sect of his own, but into the church of which he was a member. The revival of religion in the Church was the object constantly before him, and for this purpose he co-operated with as many clergymen as he met with, of a zeal similar to his own. With them he considered himself a co-worker in a common cause, that of the Church ; and for a common object, to enlighten and reform the nation. Some of these clergymen continued to labour in friendly union with him for a considerable time, and a separation from the Church was neither by him nor by them intended or suspected, as the result. On the contrary, this co-operation of the truly evangelical clergy of the day was established on the principle of affection for the Church, and zeal for the promotion of the best interests of the country ; and it continued till those differences which the subject of predestination plentifully supplied, broke out into open controversy. (2) In these early measures of Mr. Wesley,

(2) This difference of opinion might be called an unhappy one, as it separated good men from each other, whose efforts, had they continued united, might have produced a more powerful effect upon the state of religion in the Church of England. The controversy which arose, fierce, and furious, and scurrilous as it was, on the part of many of the opponents of Mr. Wesley and Mr. Fletcher, was not, however, without an important collateral effect. The calm and Christian spirit in which these eminent men, after they were dragged into the controversy, joined with the great ability with which every point of it was discussed in their writings, could not but produce a strong impression. The doctrines of justification by faith, assurance of pardon, regeneration, and Divine influence, which had been considered by many as necessarily connected with the Calvinistic scheme, were now seen in harmony with the doctrines of God's universal love, the unrestricted extent of Christ's death, and the freeness of Divine grace. Men were no longer compelled into

there was nothing which had in itself any tendency to a separation from the Church : and at this period at least, that event could not be *foreseen*.

a choice between two extremes, Calvinism or Pelagianism, into which last error most of our English divines had fallen, in opposing the doctrine of the decrees. The ground on which many of the Reformers, and not a few of the Arminian divines had stood was thus regained ; and the great and vital truths of the gospel were offered to men, unaccompanied with the gloomy and bewildering metaphysics of theologians, who had even, with respect to Calvin's theory, "out Heroded Herod" himself. Of the arguments on each side, Mr. Southey, who has gone at some length into the controversy, is much too little acquainted with the subject to be a competent judge. The Christian and gentlemanly *manner* in which the controversy was conducted by Messrs. Wesley and Fletcher, he has recorded with fairness. To the acrid temper, and gross productions of Toplady and others, and of the writers in the *Gospel Magazine*, (so called) he has but dealt a just measure of animadversion. It is, however, a satisfaction to observe, that this bitterness of contention has long since abated. The spirit and language of the wretched work I have just mentioned, would not be tolerated in this day, even by those generally who are decided in their belief of the Calvinistic theory. It is also but justice to say of many of the Calvinists of that period, that their *Magazine* became so intemperate that they refused its support ; and that among the proximate causes of its being given up was, if I have been rightly informed, the mingled buffoonery and acerbity with which Mr. Wesley was assailed in it, and particularly the insertion of the wretched doggrel verses, entitled "The Serpent and the Fox," which Mr. Southey has given in the appendix to his second volume, "Hob in the Well," "Pope John," &c. Calvinism itself has since that period been held under various and chastened modifications. Baxter laid the foundation of what he conceived to be a middle scheme, which has been largely resorted to; the excellent Dr. Williams, of Rotherham, provided a new vest of metaphysics for the old doctrine, which though it rather muffles up the features more closely, than displays the form to any new advantage, has recommended it to the admiration of many ; others have been content to believe both systems true, though irreconcileable by human intelligence ; whilst the greater number of evangelical ministers have taken the wise course of attaching less importance than their predecessors to mere peculiarities, and have

The second period to which reference may be made in order to judge how far, or at what time Mr. Wesley "*foresaw*" that he was promoting separation, is, when he admitted the co-operation of lay preachers. The case is here stronger in favour of Mr. Southey's position; but it does not appear that even Mr. Wesley anticipated separation as the necessary consequence. In the early stages of his career, he was content to leave the good done by his ministry to the care of the clergyman of the parish in which the persons who received it resided. Mr. Southey has given the reason why he formed societies, and appointed persons to instruct them "in the ways of God." "If his converts were left to themselves, they speedily relapsed into their former habits." This was true in many cases. Mr. Southey thinks the whole effect produced upon them enthusiastic, and that, "on this account, artificial means of keeping up the excitement" were necessary. An enlightened Christian would say, that careful instruction, and religious fellowship, are the means appointed by him who knows us best to cherish impressions which, however genuine,

chosen to dwell almost exclusively upon the leading and indisputable doctrines of their faith. The Antinomian doctrine, from various causes, and among these may be reckoned the labours and writings of Messrs. Wesley and Fletcher, has evidently received a strong, and, I hope, an effectual check in this country; and in this all good men will rejoice. The recent appearance of this error in the Church of England, has proved but a temporary evil. The religious public are now too well furnished with better principles for Antinomianism to make an extensive impression upon them, and it makes no converts from the world. Its only province is to corrupt and waste within the Church of Christ.

for want of such care might die away ; and that mutual prayer, conversation, and reading the Word of God, are enjoined upon Christians in the Holy Scriptures, as necessary means of spiritual improvement, in addition to the ordinances of public worship. The clergy in general made no such provision for the religiously disposed people of their parishes ; and hence, asks Mr. Wesley, “ what was to be done in a case of so extreme necessity ? No clergyman would assist at all. The expedient that remained was to find some one among themselves, who was upright in heart, and of sound judgment in the things of God, and to desire him to meet the rest as often as he could, in order to confirm them as he was able in the ways of God, either by reading to them, or by prayer, or by exhortation.” Now surely any mind rightly influenced, would consider assemblies of people for such purposes, in so many parishes in the kingdom where nothing of the kind before existed, and where these very persons, but a little time before, were spending their leisure in idleness or in vice, as a most gratifying occurrence, both for the benefit of the individuals themselves, and the effect of their example upon others. It would, indeed, have been more satisfactory if a pious clergyman had put himself at the head of these meetings, afforded the people his counsel, and restrained any irregularities or errors which might arise ; and had clergymen so qualified and disposed been found, the Church would have reaped the full benefit of Mr. Wesley’s labours, and no separation, in any form, would have ensued. Unhappily they did not exist ; and Mr. Wesley submitted to the

irregularity, to avoid the greater evil of suffering those who had been brought under religious influence to fall away for want of care and instruction. That superintendance which the clergy were not disposed to give, he supplied as much as possible by his occasional visits; and it was more regularly afforded after the employment of lay preachers, by their regular visits, under his direction. In these measures there was no *intention* of a separation from the Church: this Mr. Southey allows; nor was it, even at that time, *foreseen* as a consequence. A *necessary* consequence it certainly was not. Mr. Southey thinks that the apparatus of Methodism, when more fully organized than at the period now referred to, might have been attached to the Church with advantage; and that its ecclesiastical constitution is defective in not having some institution answering to the preaching orders of the Church of Rome. Into this question I shall not enter; but Mr. Wesley certainly had a similar view; nor was he without hope that those simple institutions for promoting piety, which he had commenced, might have been recognized. He hoped that the spirit of religion, produced already to so great an extent, might still further influence the members of the Church and its clergy, and dispose them to view his Societies with more cordiality. He took care, therefore, and all his principles and feelings favoured the caution, that no obstacles should be placed in the way of the closest connexion of his Societies with the Establishment. None of their services were held in the hours of her public service; the Methodists formed in many parishes the great body

of her communicants ; thousands of them died in her communion ; and the lay preachers were not permitted to administer either of the sacraments to the people among whom they laboured.

Separation was not foreseen by Mr. Wesley till a later period, and then, without doubt, it was very naturally anticipated. Any hope he might have entertained of a recognition of his plans, as appendages to the constitution of the Church, must at length have vanished ; he continued to meet with hostility and opposition from many of the clergy ; and Methodism was the favourite subject of their attacks ; and disliked less perhaps on its own account, than for those principles of the Reformation on which it was founded. Perhaps the hope of preserving his Societies generally in connexion with the Church, was indulged by Mr. Wesley much longer than the reason of the case would warrant, from his own ardent feelings as a churchman ; but when a partial separation was in reality foreseen as probable, it had no sanction from him, and he appeared determined so to employ his influence to his last breath, that if separation did ensue, it should assume the mildest form possible, and be deprived of all feelings of hostility. His example, the spirit of his writings, and his advices, all tended to this ; and the fact is, that though Methodism now stands in a different relation to the Establishment than in the days of Mr. Wesley, dissent has never been formally professed by the body, and for obvious reasons. The first is, that a separation of a part of the society from the church, has not arisen from the principles

assumed by the professed Dissenters, and usually made so prominent in their discussions on the subject of establishments; the second, that a considerable number of our members actually continue in the communion of the Church of England to this day; and the third, that to leave that communion is not, in any sense, a condition of membership with us. All the services of the church and her sacraments may be observed by any person in our societies who chooses it, and they are actually observed by numbers.

The great causes which have led to separation as far as it is gone, have not been understood by Mr. Southey. It is perfectly imaginary to suppose that a disposition to this was produced by the non-jurors connecting themselves with the Methodists when they disappeared from public notice, for perhaps twenty of them never became members. It is also gratuitously assumed that many dissenters espoused Methodism, from whom a "leaven of ill-will to the Church" has been derived. Not so many persons of this description ever became Methodists as to produce much effect upon the opinions of the body at large. Nor was the cause "the natural tendency of Mr. Wesley's measures" considered simply. Of themselves those measures did not produce separation; it resulted from circumstances, which, of course, Mr. Southey would not be disposed to bring into view, if he knew them; but which were, in fact, the operating causes in chief. The true causes were—that the Clergy, generally, did not preach the doctrines of their own Church

and of the Reformation ; and that *many* of them did not adorn their profession in their lives. (3)

(3) That a great and most gratifying alteration has taken place within a few years, both in the doctrine and lives of the national clergy, is certain ; and by none is this circumstance more gladly hailed than by the Methodists. The statement of the facts mentioned above was necessary to explain the reasons which led to a departure from Mr. Wesley's original plan ; but it is not made in a spirit of hostility to the Church of England, in so many respects to be venerated, and for whose growing prosperity and perpetuity the wishes of none can be more sincere than my own. I would not forget that she is “the mother of us all,” and I can never contemplate without the deepest admiration, her noble army of confessors and martyrs, and the illustrious train of her divines, whose writings have been and continue to be the light of Christendom. Bigotry in forms of church government has a peculiar absurdity. Different opinions as to many *doctrines* may certainly plead the authority of the letter of Scripture with a much better grace than it can be urged when used to support the details of Church order, points which the Holy Spirit has left so much at large, as to furnish us only with principles and not with forms. All beside the appointment of faithful men to minister the word and sacraments, and to bear rule in the church, so as to drive away errors, and vices, is matter of pure inference. A bigot for Independency or Presbyterianism, and a bigot for Diocesan episcopacy and apostolical succession, stand upon nearly the same ground. There is little difference between the spirit of Laud, and that which *burns* in the unhallowed writings of Robinson of Cambridge, and in a late History of Dissenters. The “meekness and gentleness of Christ” is as far removed from the one as the other ; and persecution in one form or other must ever result from the want of charity, when that which “*letteth*” is taken out of the way. I would as soon trust my liberty with the most rigid episcopalian as with a bitter sectary ; and I should not feel the more confidence in him for having “liberty” and “the rights of conscience” continually in his lips. The array of so many wise and holy men on different sides of the questions of ecclesiastical polity whilst they were under a discussion to which nothing can now be added, ought by this time to have neutralized all parties. In the different circumstances of churches, much may be said for most of the various forms of government they have assumed ; for the fact seems to be, that we have often mistaken what is a mere matter of prudential regulation, for Divine prescription. Of

The first operated in this way, that as the pulpit ministered little to the edification of those whose religious views had undergone so great a change, attendance at Church, which Mr. Wesley so much inculcated, was even in his day, much neglected. The second became a matter of conscience. From the hands of a man, who gave no proofs of his spirituality, and often demonstrations, too clear, of worldly conformity, and lax morals, many could not receive the sacrament. How far this conscientious principle ought to be carried, is a question which cannot be settled, for conscience is a variable rule, dependent wholly upon the perception of our duty by the judgment. The fact, however, was, that many of the Methodists neglected that sacred ordinance, rather than receive it from men whose ministry was to them wholly unprofitable, and whose characters, as they conceived, disqualified them for the services of the altar. Add to this, that in no small number of cases, the clergy were the persecutors and calumniators of the Wesleyan Societies; that their sermons were often intemperate attacks upon their characters and opinions; and that the

what is prudent men judge variously, and the different circumstances of churches will often render a different constitution either necessary or more fitting. As to the various modes of church discipline, among us in this country, "whate'er is best administered is best," may be the true rule. The spirit of true religion in churches is the principal thing, and, as that prevails, it will regulate and sanctify every form; and, without altering it essentially, may render it "good to the use of edifying." So long as we are at liberty to adopt that which best comports with our own serious views, there seems little reason for controversy, and none certainly for contention.

Methodists were frequently regarded as intruders at the table of the Lord, rather than welcome communicants. These were the reasons why, long before Mr. Wesley's death, a great number of his societies were anxious to have the sacrament from the hands of their own preachers, under whose ministry they were instructed and edified, in whose characters they had confidence, and with respect to whom they knew, that if any disgraced their profession, they would not be suffered to exercise it.

These were the true causes which led to the partial separation of the Methodist Societies from the communion of the Church, after the death of Mr. Wesley; and this is an answer to the thousand times repeated objection, that we have departed from Mr. Wesley's principles. The fact is, that though relief to the consciences of the Societies in general, by granting them the sacrament, was restrained by Mr. Wesley's great and deserved authority, yet he himself was obliged to allow a relaxation from his own rule in London, and some other principal towns, by giving the sacrament himself, or obtaining pious clergymen to administer it, in the chapels. After his death it was out of the power of Conference, had they not felt the force of the reasons urged upon them, to prevent the administration of the sacrament to the people, by their own preachers. Yet in the controversy which this subject excited, the speculative principles of dissent had little part. The question stood on plain practical grounds:—shall the societies be obliged from their conscientious scruples, to neglect an ordinance of God? or shall we drive them to the dissenters, whose doctrines they do not

believe? or shall we under certain regulations accede to their wishes? So far from Mr. Wesley's principles and views having lost their influence with the Conference, the sacrament was forced upon none, recommended to none. The old principles were held as fast as higher duties would allow; and to this day, the administration of the sacrament in any chapel is not to be assumed as a matter of course, but must be obtained by petition to the Conference, who are to hear the case, and judge of the circumstances. Many indeed of the people, and some of the preachers, opposed these concessions; but the plan which was adopted to meet a case of conscientious scruple, and yet to avoid encouraging a departure from the primitive plan, leaving every individual to act in this respect as he was persuaded in his own mind, and receive the sacrament at church or at meeting, has at length by both parties in England been cordially acquiesed in, as warranted equally by principle and by prudence. Assuredly the Church would have gained nothing by a different measure, for the dissidents would have been compelled to join the professed dissenters. Such is the nature of our present separation from the Church, for dissent it is not, except in the minds of some individuals. Had the Church been provided generally with an evangelical, and a holy ministry, that separation would not have taken place, for the controversy between the Church and the dissenters was little known, and, still less regarded by the majority of the Methodist societies at that time, and the case is not greatly altered at the present day. The clergy had lost their hold upon the people generally,

through neglect ; and that revival of the spirit of truth and holiness, which we are now so happy to witness among them, came too late to prevent the results I have just stated. (4)

(4) It is a question somewhat difficult to be settled, whether it would not have been a prudent measure if Mr. Wesley, when he at length saw that a change in the relation of his societies to the Church of England must take place after his death, had prepared for that event, by some such moderate alterations as the Conference afterwards found it necessary to adopt. I shall not presume to offer an opinion on this point ; but certainly nothing can more strongly refute the notion that he was anxious to form a *sect*, than that he preferred to leave the Connexion to the hazard of the conflicts of different parties, which he could not but anticipate, than to form any plan of worship and discipline for that part of his people whom he might expect to assume the character of a regular church, and a distinct religious society. He probably thought that this would give sanction to separation, and might carry it beyond the real necessity of the case. The sincerity of his intention in thus leaving such matters unsettled at his death, could not be questioned, and it was probably over-ruled for good. The struggle of different views was temporary, the plan of pacification as to the sacraments, and service in church hours, adopted by the Conference, being generally and cordially acquiesced in. In forming this plan, distinguished as it is by great prudence and temper, the Conference appears in one or two points to have erred. A part of the societies assumed from that time the form, and substantive character of a regular religious body. Two things were therefore manifestly wanting, the first, a regular plan of catechising, which, as long as Methodism was no more than an appendage to the national establishment, was presumed to be performed by the clergyman, as a preparation for confirmation. This has constantly been enjoined upon the heads of families ; but it ought to have been connected with the public discipline of that part of the society which in fact had separated. The second was an enlargement of the order of Sunday worship. That the Sunday forenoon especially should be marked by the most solemn and lengthened acts of divine service, equally accords with the practice of all regular churches, with the respect due to the day, and with every hallowed feeling of the mind, at that time most free from bodily weariness, and prepared by its vigour to enter most efficiently into the sacred services of the

On the subject of the alienation of the people from the Church, by means of Methodism, much has been said and written very vaguely. Mr. Southey views this as foremost among “the evils” which Mr.

house of God. When the service practised by the Methodists on the Sunday morning before church-time, and which, for that reason, was necessarily a very brief one, came to be the regular Sunday forenoon service of the body, it was greatly defective. This was the light in which Mr. Wesley viewed it. “Some may say, our own service is public worship. Yes, in *a sense*; but not such as supersedes the church service. We never designed it should. It presupposes public prayer, like the sermons at the university. If it were designed to be instead of the church service, it would be essentially defective, for it seldom has the four grand parts of public prayer, *deprecation*, *petition*, *intercession*, and *thanksgiving*.” The plan of pacification secured the reading of the Scriptures, by making it a condition of opening any chapel in church-time, that the lessons for the day should be read. It *recommended* too, and that “strongly,” in preference to the mere reading of the lessons, the use of the liturgy. But the fault lay in not making the latter the sole and peremptory rule, a measure which then would have been gladly accepted, as a condition of opening the chapels, and by this time it would have become the established custom of the body. In many chapels our morning service is conducted in this manner, and in most of our foreign stations. It has been more recently introduced into others at home; and the public opinion among us in favour of the use of the liturgy is so much increasing, that the probability is, that in a few years it will become the general mode of our forenoon service in all the large chapels. That improvement is indeed greatly to be desired; for the liturgy *secures* the reading of a large portion of the Scriptures; it *secures* also what Mr. Wesley has properly called “the four grand parts of public worship;” it makes the service of God’s house appear more like our true *business* on the Lord’s day; and beside the aid it affords to the most devout and spiritual, a great body of evangelical truth is by constant use laid up in the minds of children and ignorant people, who, when at length they begin to pray under a religious concern, are already furnished with suitable, sanctifying, solemn, and impressive petitions. Persons well acquainted with the liturgy are certainly in a state of important preparation for the labours of the preacher; and their piety often takes a richer and more sober character from that circumstance.

Wesley effected, and a brief consideration of this point may therefore not be out of place. On the contrary, I think it not difficult to shew, that the establishment of our country, has been materially benefited by Methodism.

Rightly to determine this, it is necessary to go back to the period in which the labours of Mr. Wesley commenced. We have seen the picture drawn by Mr. Southey himself of the church, the clergy, and the people; a picture which he was under no temptation to overcharge. When the Messrs. Wesleys, Mr. Whitefield, and their early coadjutors entered upon their itinerant career, it is a matter of fact and of history, that no general plans for the illumination of the nation were either in operation, or in the contemplation of any one. Nothing had this bearing. There were no persons associated in institutions of any kind, making this a common object. The pious labours of a few zealous clergymen, (and few they were,) and ministers of other denominations, were confined to their own parishes and congregations.

A settled ministry may supply this kind of preparation by more of personal instruction, than a changing system like ours will allow; and to us therefore every means of embodying truth in the minds of those who attend our ministry, is more than ordinarily necessary. It is rather singular, and it shews the inconsistencies into which the human mind often falls, that in places where the use of the liturgy in our chapels has been opposed, the opposition has chiefly arisen from persons most friendly to the establishment. This has not indeed been exclusively the case, for in other places the objectors have been so *saçacious* as to discover that the forms of devotion in which Methodism was nursed, are *innovations*; and they are become *spiritual* in so high a degree above the founder of Methodism himself, that what he through life continually observed and enforced appears to them but a barren formality.

There were no means of general application in existence, beyond the ill-attended services of the Church, (which in themselves had but a very partial operation, because not generally seconded by the efforts of the pulpit and the private example and pastoral care of the clergy,) to remove the ignorance and correct the vices which Mr. Southey acknowledges to have been almost universal. The measures taken by those eminent men, to whom a better state of things is chiefly owing, applied themselves to existing evils on a large scale. They acted in concert; they conceived noble designs. They visited the large towns; they took populous mining, manufacturing, and commercial districts in their way; they preached in places of public resort; they formed religious societies, and inspired them with zeal for the instruction and salvation of their neighbours. They employed men of zeal, character, and competent acquaintance with practical and experimental religion, to assist them in this work as it widened before them; and they gave it their vigilant superintendence. The benefits they were the means of producing did not remain with the individuals: they were introduced by those individuals into families; they influenced whole neighbourhoods. Religious knowledge was spread, and religious influence exerted. The manners of the rude were civilized; barbarous sports and pastimes fell greatly into disuse; and a higher standard of morals was erected, of itself of no small importance to the reformation of manners. All this is substantially allowed by Mr. Southey.

It is equally a matter of fact and of history, that, beside those means which their personal labours, and

the auxiliaries they brought forward to their assistance, afforded to revive and extend the spirit of religion in the nation, for a great number of years no other means of extensive application were employed to promote this end. The effects which were thus produced began, however, after a considerable time had elapsed, to operate collaterally as well as directly. Many of the clergy were aroused, the doctrines of the Articles and Homilies began to be heard more distinctly and more frequently in their pulpits. Holy and zealous men in different denominations began to labour for the public instruction and reformation. The great institution of Sunday schools, though devised by a churchman, was but slowly encouraged. The Methodists and Dissenters were carrying those schools to a great extent when the members of the Church followed: some from a fear, laudable enough, lest the body of the poor should be alienated from the establishment; others, as perceiving in the institution the means of conveying instruction and religious influence to those who most needed them. The circulation of the Scriptures by Bible Societies followed, but still that was an effect of that new order of principles and feelings which had been introduced into the nation. Those principles of zeal for the moral improvement of society further led, at a later period, to general measures for the education of the poor by the two great national education societies, which promise so much benefit to the country. All these measures for enlightening and moralizing the people may be traced to several intermediate causes; but it is only justice to the memory of such men as the Wesleys and Whitefield,

men whom Mr. Southey has flippantly branded as enthusiasts, to state, that they all primarily sprang from that spirit, which, under God, they were the means of exciting in a slumbering church, and a dark and neglected land. This is a point not to be denied, for long before any of those efforts for public instruction and reformation which could be considered national were called forth, these aspersed men were pursuing their gigantic labours among the profligate population of London, and the principal towns of the kingdom; among the miners of Cornwall, the colliers of Kingswood and Newcastle, and the manufacturers of Yorkshire and Lancashire; whilst the preachers they employed were every year spreading themselves into dark and semi-barbarous villages in the most secluded parts of the kingdom; enduring bitter privations, and encountering, almost daily, the insults of rude mobs, that they might convey to them the knowledge of religion.

Now, in order to judge of these efforts, and to ascertain what “evil” has resulted to the church of England from Mr. Wesley’s measures, it is but fair to consider what the state of the country and of the church must in all human probability have been, had he and his associates never appeared, or confined themselves to the obscurity of Epworth and similar parishes. It is not denied that other means and agents might have been raised up by God to effect the purposes of his mercy; but it is denied that any such were raised up, for this is matter of fact. No agency has appeared in the Church, or out of it, tending to the general instruction and evangelizing of the nation, and operating on a large scale, but

what is much subsequent in its origin to the exertions of the Messrs. Wesleys and Whitefield; and which may not be traced to the spirit which they excited, and often into the very bosoms of those who derived their first light and influence, either directly or indirectly, from them. What *was* and not what *might have been*, can only be made the ground of argument.

But for their labours, therefore, and the labours of those persons in the Church, among the Dissenters, and their own people, whom they embued with the same spirit, that state of things in the church of England, and in the country, which is pictured by Mr. Southey in his ninth chapter, must have continued, at least for many years, for any thing which appears to the contrary; for no substitute for their exertions was supplied by any party. They took the place of nothing which could be nationally beneficial; they opposed no obstacle to the operation of any plan of usefulness, had it been in preparation. If they, therefore, had not appeared, and kindled that flame of religious feeling, which ultimately spread into many denominations of Christians, and there gave birth to that variety of effort which now diffuses itself through the land, Mr. Southey comes to a very erroneous conclusion, if he supposes that a spirit of piety and zeal, excited at a much later period, would have found the nation and the Church at all improved. The probability, almost amounting to certainty, is, that both would have been found still more deteriorated, and in a state which would have presented obstacles much more formidable to their recovery. Mr. Southey has applied too much of his attention to such subjects not to know, that a number

of those demoralizing causes were then coming into operation, which, with all the counteractions since supplied by the church, and the different religious sects, by schools, and by bibles, have produced very injurious effects upon the morals and principles of the nation;—that the tide of an unprecedented commercial prosperity began then to flow into the country, and continued, for a long succession of years, to render the means of sensual indulgence more ample, and to corrupt more deeply all ranks of society;—that in consequence of the independence thus given to the lower orders in many of the most populous districts, the moral controul and influence of the higher became gradually weaker;—that the agitation of political subjects, during the American quarrel, and the French revolution, with the part which even the operative classes were able to take in such discussions by means of an extended education, (5)

(5) The effects above referred to education generally have been by some placed to the account of those efforts to promote the instruction of the poor, which have sprung from the zeal of religious societies. They forget that the growing wages of mechanics and manufacturers in the periods referred to, supplied the means of mere education to their children, without at all connecting it with the principles of religion. Education would, therefore, have been sufficiently extended to produce mischievous effects, and that without any counteraction, had those religious bodies never instituted Sunday and other Schools. We neither have it now, nor have ever had it in our power to choose whether knowledge shall be diffused among the labouring classes, or not.—This is too frequently lost sight of, and a whole train of ingenious reasoning has been vitiated, in consequence of so obvious a fact not having been adverted to. Some have discussed the subject, as though the education of the lower classes was entirely dependent upon provisions of government, and the efforts of the charitable. On the contrary, in consequence of the progress of commerce in this country, and the improvement which it has made in the condition of the

produced, as will always be the case among the half informed, a strong tendency to republicanism, a

poor generally, immense numbers who still remain in the labouring classes, have been taught the arts of reading and writing at the expense of their parents. Had there then been no charitable schools for the education of the poor, a sufficient number of persons would have been mixed with them in every shop and factory, and in the daily avocations of life, and the places of vicious resort, who, themselves being able to read pernicious publications, both as to religion and polities, would have conveyed their poison as widely as it could be transmitted by that general education which most enlightened persons have advocated, but from which some have feared the perversion of the principles of the populace. The infection would not, it is true, have had so many channels for its conveyance, but it would have found that mass of ignorance and vice to which it had access, much better prepared to receive it; and it would have spread without any control, either from awakened intelligence, or from just opinions early deposited in the mind.

Those who urge the crimes of society, and the late perturbed state of the populace in many parts of the country, as presumptions, at least, that the education of the poor has not produced the effects hoped for, seem also to assume that the friends of universal education have promised the public more than has been realized. There may have been strong and ineptious things said on the subject, both in sermons, and in speeches, and in the reports of school-societies, by minds of sanguine temperament; but surely they never meant that we should overlook the counteractions which the corrupt nature of man, and the seductions offered by vice to a feebly-resisting nature, bring into operation against all institutions which aim at the moral improvement of mankind. Higher institutions than those of education are subject to the same kind of opposition; and, with all the general benefit they produce, have their disappointments and reverses. The circulation of the Scriptures, and the exercise of the Christian ministry, may be given as instances in point; and the same objections, drawn from partial failures, might be as reasonably turned against them. The Bible does not sanctify all who read it; the most faithful pulpit, hung round as it may be with trophies of moral victories, cannot boast universal conquest over the ignorance and vices of those who habitually surround it. Even the most careful education of a family, by the wisest, the most tender, and the most competent parents, will often be found unable to accomplish its designs; but

restless desire of political change on every pinching of the times, and its constant concomitant, an aver-

who concludes any thing against parental care on this account? The operation of the great institutions for the education of the poor,—the National Schools, those of the British and Foreign School Society,—the Sunday Schools of the kingdom, and other similar educational charities, are not to be judged by too severe a rule. Let it be considered, that the moral effect of the school upon the child, is often counteracted by the example of parents; and that the immoral habits, and too often the total irreligion and profanity at home, fall upon children, thus circumstanced, with an influence derived from the double source of natural authority, and the pre-disposition to evil in their own hearts.

We are, however, willing to allow, that if those who seem disposed to question the benefit of general education, ask, as the proof of its salutary effect, more than is reasonable, the friends of education have given some cause for so high a demand, by an occasional extravagance of sentiment on their part; and we make this concession the more willingly, because the inordinate opinions to which we allude, have led, in some cases, to errors in the conduct of charity schools, which must be remedied, or a greater disappointment will ensue.

Many of the zealous advocates of education seem to have conceived of instruction as a kind of moral magic, which was at once to charm society into industry, sobriety, and virtue, rather than as a discipline, diligently implanting good principles, and maintaining a firm but patient struggle with the evil tendencies of the human mind. The worst part of this folly has been the too frequent separation of religion from education, and the confining of this hope of magical effect to the mere arts of reading, writing, and arithmetic. To construct the moral man, it has been too often thought sufficient to give energy to the intellectual man; and thus those means which Divine Providence has put within our power, to use for our own improvement, and for the improvement of each other, and from which alone moral influence can flow, have been neglected, or being regarded only as secondary, have been very partially, or feebly applied. The efforts made for several years past to instruct the poor, have done much good; but they have done good only as they have been connected with religion. The history of man, at home and abroad, in modern and in ancient times, sufficiently proves that it is not in the nature of mere human science to produce moral regulation and restraint. For this reason also, the education spread among the people

sion to the national establishment, partly as the result of ill-digested theories, partly as controlling the favourite notions of the disaffected, and partly because this feeling was encouraged by the negligent habits of many of the clergy, and the absence of that influence they might have acquired in their parishes by careful pastoral attentions. To all this is to be added the diffusion of infidel principles, both of foreign and home growth, which, from the studies of the learned, descended into the shop of the mechanic, and, embodied in cheap and popular works, found their way into every part of the empire. To

of this country would have been more efficient, had it been more studiously connected with religion; had the principles of Christianity been more carefully implanted in the memory; had a regular attendance on the public worship of Almighty God been more punctually observed, and more rigidly enjoined; had the due place been given in every school to the word of God; and had the full tone of the youthful mind, so to speak, been wound up to a consenting sympathy with the supreme importance of spiritual and eternal things. The hoped-for effect will often fail; but it ought to be the concern of all who are engaged in the education of the poor, that it should not fail for want of the exact and serious application of all the means of moral improvement in our power.

The whole question is reduced to this; not whether knowledge shall circulate among the poor, (for that cannot be prevented,) but, whether it shall be communicated by the charitable and influential ranks of society, accompanied by those principles of religion which alone can afford the hope of rendering it a moral corrective. We may suffer a vast number of the lower orders to remain illiterate; but they will not be excluded on that account from the opinions of the day. They will learn them from those of their own class who have got their learning independently of charities; and, should these opinions be pernicious, it is easy to see how much more injuriously they must generally operate upon the unprepared, than upon the guarded mind. The Christian public has it in its power to confer the most substantial benefit upon the country, by a general system of education, connected with religion.

counteract agencies and principles so active and so pernicious, it is granted, that no means have yet been applied of complete adequacy. This is the reason why their effects are so rife in the present day, and that we are now in the midst of a state of things which no considerate man can contemplate without some anxiety. These circumstances, so devastating to morals and good principles, could only have been fully neutralized by the ardent exertions of every clergyman in his parish, of every dissenting minister in his congregation, of every Methodist preacher in his circuit, of every private Christian in his own circle, or in the place which useful and pious institutions of various kinds would have assigned him ; and even then the special blessing of God, that influence upon men's minds, and that efficient co-operation with human means, which Mr. Southey treats so lightly, would have been necessary to give effect to the whole. But had no correctives been applied, what had been the present state of the nation and of the Church ? The labours of the founders of Methodism were directly counteractive of the evils just mentioned from the beginning; and those have little reason to stigmatise them, who deplore such evils most, and yet have done least for their correction and restraint. Wherever these men went, they planted the principles of religion in the minds of the multitudes who heard them ; they acted on the *offensive* against immorality, infidelity, and error; the Societies they raised were employed in doing good to all ; the persons they associated with them in the work of national reformation were always engaged in spreading good principles ; and though great

multitudes were beyond their reach, they spread themselves into every part of the land, turning the attention of men to religious concerns, calming their passions, guarding them against the strifes of the world, enjoining the scriptural principles of "obedience to magistrates," and a sober, temperate, peaceable, and benevolent conduct. The direct effect of their exertions was great; and it increased in energy and extent as the demoralizing causes before-mentioned acquired also greater activity; and when their indirect influence began to appear more fully in the national church, and in other religious bodies, remedies more commensurate with the evils existing in the country began to be applied. I shall not affect to say what would have been the state of the church of England under the uncontrolled operation of all the causes of moral deterioration, and civil strife, to which I have adverted; or what hold that church would have had upon the people at this day, had the spirit of religion not been revived in the country; and if, when ancient prejudices had been destroyed by the spread of deleterious novelties in the opinions of men, no new bond between it and the nation at large had been created. But if, as I am happy to believe, the national church has much more influence, and much more respect now than formerly; and that its influence and the respect due to it is increasing with the increase of its evangelical clergy, this is all owing to the existence of a stronger spirit of piety; and in producing that, the first great instruments were the men stigmatized as "*enthusiasts*," by the Author of the Life of Wesley. Not only has the spirit which they excited improved the

religious state of the church, but it has disposed the great body of religious people, not of the church, to admire and respect those numerous members of the establishment, both clergymen and laics, whose eminent piety, talents, and usefulness, have done more to abate the prejudices arising from different views of church government, than a thousand treatises could have effected, however eloquently written, or ably argued.

But who are the persons whom the Methodists have alienated from the Church ? Here, too, Mr. Southey and others have laboured under great mistakes. They have “alienated” those for the most part, who never were, in any substantial sense, and never would have been of the Church. Very few of her serious members have at any time been separated from her communion by a connection with us, for they have usually continued attendants on her services, and observers of her sacraments. This was the case during the life of Mr. Wesley, and continues to be so in many instances now ; and when an actual separation of a few such persons has occurred, it has been usually compensated by a return of others from us to the Church, especially of opulent persons, or their children, in consequence of that superior influence which an established church must always exert upon people of that class. For the rest, they have been brought chiefly from the ranks of the ignorant, and the careless ; persons who had little knowledge, and no experience of the power of religion ; negligent of religious services of every kind, and many of whom, but for the agency of Methodism, would have swelled the ranks of those who are

equally disaffected to church and state. If such persons are not now churchmen, they are influenced by no feelings hostile to the institutions of their country. In another respect also, Methodism answers an important purpose. It forms a middle body between the establishment and the dissenters, and affords the means of religious assistance to many who fully approve of the ecclesiastical polity neither of the one, nor the other. Mr. Southey, with all his exceptions to Methodism, thinks that an advantage would be gained by formally attaching us in some way to the Church. This is no proof of his acquaintance with the subject on which he writes. The time in which such a recognition of Methodism was most practicable, has long since passed away. Perhaps it would never have answered any important end; but certainly it is now neither possible nor desirable. There is a large class of people whom the Church cannot reach, which fall within our reach; and the church has its own sphere, into which we cannot, and are not at all anxious to intrude.

§ 8. *Miscellaneous Strictures and Corrections.*

To several miscellaneous instances of unfair and unsupported statement, and of illiberal construction, I shall lastly direct the attention of the reader.

Mr. Southey has twice referred to a passage in the Minutes of the third Conference, for a purpose which cannot but be deemed disingenuous. The passage is, “ Did we not at the beginning *purposely* throw them into convictions, into strong sorrow and

fear, &c. ? Ans. We did, and so we should do still." Here Mr. Southey seems to think that he has a full confirmation of his manner of accounting for the strong effects produced upon many persons by Mr. Wesley and his preachers. The idea he would convey is, that in order to produce such effects, art and finesse were resorted to, and of course that nothing more than a transient impression was made upon the feelings. The passage, it is true, is carelessly worded ; a very frequent fault in the early Minutes. But if Mr. Southey had been candid enough in this instance to suffer this solitary phrase to have been explained by its context, he would have seen, that Mr. Wesley meant no more than is plainly expressed in the question and answer immediately preceding : " Do we sufficiently labour, when men begin to be convinced of sin, to take away all they lean upon ? Should we not endeavour, with all our might, to overturn their false foundations ? Ans. This was at first one of our principal points, and it ought to be so still." Mr. Wesley did not certainly mean, that any *art* should be used to affright people ; that even in stating the most solemn truths of the Scriptures a rhetorical finesse, which his good taste always disgusted, should be employed to influence the imagination. Even the passage Mr. Southey has quoted, from one of Mr. Wesley's sermons, in proof that he himself used language calculated to produce this effect, refutes his representation. It is a plain, unrhetorical annunciation of the doctrine of Scripture on the point before him, which might be paralleled with a thousand passages, from the most eminent divines of every church. It is earnest, and faithful, and pointed,

as became a man who believed the truths he taught, and was, doubtless, "*purposely*" intended, in the best sense, to alarm and stir up the careless and self-righteous; and, in the same innocent sense, every minister worthy of the name, "*purposely*" endeavours to produce effect upon his hearers. Mr. Southey's insinuation however lies with little weight against Mr. Wesley. Nothing could surpass the simplicity of his preaching; nothing was more distant from his manner than the arts of the declaimer. Had the charge been brought against Mr. Whitefield, it would have had much more plausibility. His manner was histrionic; his address unequalled, though in him I believe the talent was sanctified and overruled by a higher power. No two preachers of eminence were ever more unlike than Mr. Wesley and Mr. Whitefield. Mr. Hampson, in his Life of Mr. Wesley, (6) has happily caught the distinguishing characteristics.

"Never was the contrast greater between public characters than between Mr. Wesley and Mr. Whitefield. The former, when he was himself, had an easy fluency of expression, and an address and manner particularly chaste and natural. He was often logical and convincing, and sometimes descriptive; but he never soared into sublimity, or descended into the pathetic. His style was the calm, equal flow of a placid stream, gliding gently within its banks, without the least ruffle or agitation upon its surface. The eloquence of Mr. Whitefield was of another kind. It was more various; and yet, with all its variety, in him it was strictly natural. He was a preacher who alter-

(6) This work has supplied Mr. Southey with some of his best, and some of his worst remarks. It was written under strong prejudices, and some degree of resentment, which the respectable Author lived to surmount.

uately thundered and lightened upon his audience ; now filling them with terror, and now touching and affecting them with all the softer and more pleasing emotions. He knew how to inspire them with whatever passion he was desirous to call forth ; and the smiles or tears of his hearers were equally at his command. Though not so accurate a speaker as Mr. Wesley, he was more popular. He had a louder and more musical voice ; his tones were more varied ; his action much more diversified, and his whole address in public was that of a master in all the arts of popularity."

An aged and respectable clergyman lately observed with respect to Mr. Wesley's preaching, that it always reminded him of the lines of Denham,

" Though deep, yet clear ; though gentle, yet not dull ;
Strong without rage ; without o'erflowing full."

It is to be feared that Mr. Southey, in reality, takes exceptions to the doctrine taught by Mr. Wesley, the real liability of unconverted men to future punishment, and that he would have greatly preferred the ministry of those, who

" Never mention *hell* to ears polite."

A much heavier charge lies against him as to two quotations, one from the sermons of Mr. Wesley, the other from a work by Mr. Fletcher : the former of which he has garbled, and given to the latter a false application. I regret to make this charge, because the *general* fairness of Mr. Southey's book, whatever may be thought of his opinions, deserves commendation. It is clear, however, that as Mr. Southey gets towards the end of his work, and contemplates Mr. Wesley as the head of a religious body, which has in part separated from the church, his prejudices become more powerful ; and

having, from a bitter dissenter, become an ardent churchman, he probably thinks it right to prove the sincerity of his conversion by his zeal. In closing his volumes he appears, therefore, much more disposed to detract both from the character of Mr. Wesley, and of Methodism, than in the body of the work. The quotations in question are understood by him as proving, that the moral good produced by the labours of Mr. Wesley was in fact but very small; and this impression so well suited his purpose, that either he did not give himself time to read the extracted passages in their connexion, or he has wilfully and dishonourably perverted the meaning of their authors. The first passage is from one of Mr. Wesley's sermons, and is thus quoted by Mr. Southey:

"There were times when Wesley perceived and acknowledged how little reformation had been effected in the majority of his followers: 'Might I not have expected,' said he, 'a general increase of faith and love, of righteousness and true holiness; yea, and of the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, meekness, gentleness, fidelity, goodness, temperance?—Truly, when I saw what God had done among his people between forty and fifty years ago, when I saw them warm in their first love, magnifying the Lord, and rejoicing in God their Saviour, I could expect nothing less than that all these would have lived like angels here below; that they would have walked continually as seeing Him who is invisible, having constant communion with the Father and the Son, living in eternity, and walking in eternity. I looked to see 'a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people'; in the whole tenor of their conversation 'showing forth his praise who had called them into his marvellous light.' But, instead of this, it brought forth error in ten thousand shapes. It brought forth enthusiasm, imaginary inspiration, ascribing to the all-wise God all the wild, absurd, self-inconsistent dreams of a heated imagination. It brought forth pride. It brought forth prejudice,

evil surmising, censoriousness, judging and condemning one another ; all totally subversive of that brotherly love which is the very badge of the Christian profession, without which, whosoever liveth is counted dead before God. It brought forth anger, hatred, malice, revenge, and every evil word and work ; all direful fruits, not of the Holy Spirit, but of the bottomless pit. It brought forth such base grovelling affections, such deep earthly-mindedness, as that of the poor heathens, which occasioned the lamentation of their own poet over them : *O curvae in terras animæ et cœlestium inanes !*"

Now if this passage were to be taken as Mr. Southey has insidiously put it, it would not have been out of his province, as the biographer of Mr. Wesley, and the historian of Methodism, to have compared this representation with those numerous passages in Mr. Wesley's writings in which a very different representation is made of the success of his labours, in order to ascertain a fact which was surely important to the inquiry he had voluntarily undertaken, and to determine the precise quantum of good produced by Methodism. But not only was it Mr. Southey's duty to settle the average of these very opposite statements ; but to reconcile the passage in which he affects to find Methodism condemned by Mr. Wesley with those numerous and liberal admissions as to the real and extensive good produced by it, which he himself has made in various parts of his most inconsistent volumes. Nay, I must think, that if Mr. Southey had not been conscious that he was taking an unwarrantable liberty with the quotations in question, he would have felt himself bound to examine these apparent contradictions at some length, instead of hastily leaving them, supported by a few con-

firmatory dogmatical assertions of his own, to produce the impression which he designed. But the dishonesty of our Author must here be exposed. The passage which he has given as one continuous extract from Mr. Wesley, is made up of two, and those clauses are left out which would have explained its real meaning. Nor is it true, as Mr. Southey states, that it was written by Mr. Wesley to show “ how little real reformation had been effected in the great body of his followers.” Instead of this, the first part of the quotation says nothing of the degree of “ real reformation” wrought among his followers, but speaks of what had been done in the *nation*, in comparison of what he, not unreasonably, expected from the commencement of so extraordinary a work of God. To prevent the passage from being so understood, Mr. Southey dexterously slipped out a sentence between two parts of the quotation. Mr. Wesley, after asking, “ might I not have expected a general increase of faith, and love, of righteousness,” &c. adds, “ was it not reasonable to expect that these fruits would have overspread his whole *church*? ” This is left out. Now the term church he never applied to his Societies, but to the Church of England, and here, he clearly means by it, all throughout the land, who professed to be of her communion. “ Instead of this,” Mr. Wesley observes, “ the vineyard brought forth wild grapes, it brought forth error in a thousand shapes,” and many persons instead of following the doctrines taught by him, followed these errors; but they were not surely, as Mr. Southey would represent, Mr. Wesley’s “ followers,” when they followed opinions and teachers

which had no sanction from him. Nor does he only refer to errors which arose from the perversions of the doctrines of Methodism, but to errors which arose from a heated and virulent opposition made to them, both in the church and out of it. By the zealous propagation of truth, the advocates of error were made more active, and in many cases more successful, the constant result in every age. “It brought forth enthusiasm,” &c. But not in the great body of Mr. Wesley’s “followers,” as our author would have it understood. This could not be his meaning; for on the contrary he affirms, that, generally, “the work in his Societies was rational as well as scriptural, as pure from enthusiasm as from superstition. It is true, the opposite has been continually affirmed; but to *affirm* is one thing, to *prove* is another.” Mr. Wesley referred to the case of George Bell, and a few others in London, who were opposed and put away almost as soon as their errors appeared, and whose real enthusiasm was injurious, not only to the few infected by it, but operated largely for a time to counteract the influence of true religion in the land, by confirming the prejudices which all worldly men indulge against it, and who never fail to fix upon such circumstances to bring it into disrepute. “It brought forth prejudice, evil surmising, censoriousness, judging and condemning one another, all totally subversive of that brotherly love, which is the very badge of the Christian profession,” &c. Nor does this apply, as Mr. Southey represents it, to “the great body of his followers.” On the contrary, all know, who are acquainted with the history of Mr. Wesley’s

Societies, that, till his death, no body of Christians equal in number, and for so long a period, were ever more, and few so much, distinguished for the absence of strifes and contention, and for a lively affection towards each other. Mr. Southey was either not aware, or intentionally did not advert to the fact, that Mr. Wesley did not consider his Societies as a sect, and as such separated from the body of religious people in the nation; and hence in this, and other parts of his writings, he addresses the religious public, and not his own "followers" exclusively. The work of which he speaks in these quotations, he knew was begun and carried on, not merely by himself, his brother, and those who continued to think with him, but by Mr. Whitefield, and others who adopted the theory of Calvin; and with them he wished, as far as possible, to co-operate, as well as with all, of every name, "who loved the Lord Jesus in sincerity," in spreading the influence of religion. When, therefore, he speaks of those circumstances which had arisen to obstruct the spread of that work which once promised very rapidly to leaven the whole nation, his observations have a wider range than Mr. Southey assigns to them. The prejudice, censoriousness, and subversion of brotherly love, of which he complains in the quotation just given, may be supposed to be the results of that controversy which had been stirred up on the subject of predestination, and in which Mr. Southey has shown that candour and brotherly affection had little place. The spirit thus excited, unquestionably separated those, who, had they continued united, would have produced a much more powerful and extensive effect.

upon society. In this respect the controversy was injurious to the cause of religion. It chiefly engaged the attention of those who were labouring for the moral benefit of the nation, and who alone had that truth in possession by which any effectual impression could be made ; and it corroded the tempers of many of them, as well as destroyed their co-operation. Of the moral state of his “ followers” Mr. W. is not speaking.

An equally unworthy artifice is made use of by Mr. Southey in the latter part of the quotation, which he urges as a further proof that little moral effect was produced among the “ followers” of Mr. Wesley. Here also the passage is mutilated, and all is carefully left out which was necessary to its being understood aright. “The vineyard,” Mr. Wesley observes, “brought forth wild grapes, such base grovelling affections, such deep earthly-mindedness, as that of the poor heathens, which occasioned the lamentation of their own poet, *O curvae in terras animæ et celestium inanes!* O souls, bowed down to earth, and void of God.” But of whom is this affirmed? Mr. Southey says of “the great body of Mr. Wesley’s followers,” and yet under his eye, in the same paragraph, these censures are restricted to the rich; to persons “increased in goods,” and consequently were not spoken of the body who, as Mr. Southey knows, were sufficiently poor. But then, perhaps, these few rich persons were Mr. Wesley’s “followers?” Mr. Southey cannot even thus be exculpated, for almost in the same breath Mr. Wesley declares, that they despised communion with his society. He doubtless referred to a few persons

who, when low in their circumstances, had given some hope of their future piety and usefulness, but becoming rich, they had imbibed the spirit of the world, and so far from being the great body of his followers, were not his followers at all.

The unfairness of these quotations from Mr. Wesley's "Sermon on God's Vineyard," can only be equalled by another from the works of Mr. Fletcher, which immediately follows. "Mr. Fletcher," he observes, "confirms this unfavourable representation, and indicates one of its causes. There were members of Society, he said, who spoke in the most glorious manner of Christ, and of their interest in his *complete salvation*, and yet were indulging the most unchristian tempers, and living in the greatest immoralities." But Mr. Fletcher in this quotation does not refer to the members of the Methodist Societies in general; he speaks not of the great body of his "followers," as Mr. Southey wishes to have it understood. On the contrary, he refers to a few who adopted the Antinomian creed, and who uniformly became the virulent opposers of Mr. Wesley and his "followers," and he points out the practical evils of the Antinomian heresy in general, an error which never infected more than a few individuals in the Methodist Societies, which from their commencement were well instructed in this controversy, and were the steady, and often ardent opponents of Calvinism in all its forms. The phrases which Mr. Fletcher uses in these extracts sufficiently prove this. "*Christ's complete salvation*," "*finished salvation*," &c. are expressions which never obtained among us;—they mark the Shibboleth of persons of

very opposite views to those, which, from the first, were taught by Mr. W. On the ground of these misrepresentations, Mr. Southey concludes, that Mr. Wesley's system "tended to produce more of the appearance than of the reality of religion." But how does he know this? He has no intimate or personal acquaintance with it. The only authority on which he grounds the inference lies in the quotations which have just been examined, and which he has either greatly mistaken, or designedly mutilated and perverted.

As Mr. Southey was not able to comprehend the motives which led the founders of Methodism and their associates to engage in a work of so much labour and peril as to spread evangelical truth throughout the land, because they resulted from principles and feelings of an order very different from those by which he himself appears to have been influenced, it was not to be expected that he should do full justice to their merits as *sufferers* in the cause of righteousness. But considering them merely as well-intentioned enthusiasts, it would have done no discredit to his heart had he shown himself more sensible of that heroic bravery, mingled with meekness, patience, and tenderness to their persecutors, which they exemplified. Their labours in the dark, and then but half civilized parts of our country, were not unaccompanied with suffering and danger; the opposition raised by bigotry and brutality was neither partial nor infrequent. That light and influence, which ever since have been contending with the ignorance and immorality of the land, were in almost every place met with the resistance which

springs from uncharitable and blind prejudices, and which zeal for the forms of religion always supplies in proportion as its spirit departs. Methodism, in almost every place, at its first introduction, had its confessors: in some places its martyrs. All had to endure contumely, and to become a by-word, and a proverb of reproach to their neighbours; great numbers suffered the loss of substance; many the spoiling of their goods; many personal ill treatment, destructive to future health, and in some cases inducing a premature death. The preachers especially were often cruelly assaulted, and put in hazard of their lives. They, however, persevered, and laid the foundation of a better state of things; and though Mr. Southey has seen nothing to admire or commend either in their zeal or their patience, that will not affect the reward they have on high. The utter want of feeling with which Mr. Southey adverts to these circumstances is among the most striking characters of his book; and it adds another fact to prove, that though the sentimentalism of poets and novelists may run in a tide sufficiently copious through their books, and amidst the creations of their fancy, yet it is often either factitious like their subjects, or so drained off by the demands of fiction, that what is real in life, like an African desert, is left unmoistened by a spring, and uncheered by a shower. Mr. Southey's semi-infidelity, in the case before us, has greatly tended to counteract those better feelings of which his nature may be capable, even when he is not writing verse; and, as the true principle from which those who exposed themselves to reproach and perse-

cution for the moral amelioration of their country acted was either unknown to him, or not to be admitted into his work, he finds even in their sufferings subjects for reproach and contempt, rather than for admiration.

Mr. Whitefield, he tells us, had “a great longing to be persecuted,” though the very quotation from his letter, on which he grounds the aspersion, shows nothing more than a noble defiance of suffering, should it occur in the course of what he esteemed his duty. Similar sarcasms have been cast by infidels upon all, in every age, who have suffered for the sake of Christ; and like those of Mr. Southey, they were intended to darken the lustre of an heroism springing from love to the Saviour and the souls of men, by referring the conduct to which that principle prompted them into spiritual pride, and a desire to render themselves conspicuous. Of John Nelson, one of Mr. Wesley’s first lay coadjutors, who endured no ordinary share of oppression and suffering, as unsought, unprovoked, and unmerited, as the most modest and humble demeanor on his part could render it, he truly says, that “he had as high a spirit, and as brave a heart as ever Englishman was blessed with;” yet even the narration of his wrongs, so scandalous to the magistracy of the day, but sustained by him in the full spirit of Christian constancy, is not dismissed without a sneer at this honest and suffering man himself. “To prison therefore Nelson was taken, to his *heart’s content.*” And so because he chose a prison rather than violate his conscience, and endured imprisonments and other injuries, with the unbend-

ing feeling of a high and noble mind, corrected and controlled by “the meekness and gentleness of Christ,” imprisonment was his desire, and the distinction which he is supposed to have derived from it, his motive! Before a criticism so flippant and callous, no character, however sacred and revered, could stand. Mr. Southey might apply it with equal success to the persecutions of the apostles, and the first Christians themselves; to the confessors in the reign of Mary; and the whole noble army of martyrs.

The real danger to which these excellent men were exposed, is, however, carefully concealed. Whitefield’s fears, or rather hopes, of persecution, he informs us, “were suited to the days of Queen Mary, Bishop Gardiner, and Bishop Bonner; they were ridiculous or disgusting in the time of George the Second, Archbishop Potter, and Bishop Gibson.” This is said because Mr. Whitefield thought that he might probably be called to “resist unto blood,” and our author would have it supposed, that all this was “safe boasting,” in the reign of George the Second; and whilst the English Church had its Archbishop Potter, and its Bishop Gibson. No, nor in the early part of the reign of George the Third, and with other bishops in the church as excellent as Potter and Gibson, was the anticipation groundless. The real danger was in fact so great from the brutality of the populace, the ignorance and supineness of the magistrates, and the mob-exciting activity of the *clergy*, one of whom was usually the instigator of every tumult, that every man who went forth on the errand of mercy in that

day, took his life in his hand, and needed the spirit of a martyr, though not in danger of suffering a martyr's death by regular civil or ecclesiastical process. Mr. Southey has himself furnished in part the confutation of his own suggestion, that little danger was to be apprehended, by the brief statements he has given of the hair-breadth escapes of the Wesleys, and of Mr. Whitefield, and of the sufferings of John Nelson. But a volume might be filled with accounts of outrages committed from that day to our own, in different places, (for they now occasionally occur in obscure and unenlightened parts of the country,) upon the persons of the Methodists, for the sole fault of visiting neglected places, and preaching the gospel of salvation to those who, if Christianity be true, are in a state of spiritual darkness and danger. To be pelted with stones, dragged through ponds, beaten with bludgeons, rolled in mud, and to suffer other modes of ill treatment, was in the anticipation of all the first Methodist preachers when they entered upon their work, and this was also the lot of many of the people. Some lives were lost, and many shortened: the most singular escapes are on record; and if the tragedy was not deeper, that was owing at length to the explicit declarations of his late Majesty on the subject of toleration, and the upright conduct of the judges in their circuits, and in the higher courts, when an appeal was made to the laws in some of the most atrocious cases. Assuredly, the country magistrates in general, and the clergy, were entitled to little share of the praise. Much of this is acknowledged by Mr. Southey, but he attempts to

throw a part of the blame upon the preachers themselves. "Their doctrines of perfection and assurance" were, he thinks, among the causes of their persecution; and "their zeal was not tempered with discretion." With discretion, in our author's view of it, their zeal was not tempered. Such discretion would neither have put them in the way of persecution, nor brought it upon them; but they were not in any sober sense indiscreet: and as for doctrines, the mobs and their excitors were then just as discriminating as mobs have ever been from the beginning of the world. They were usually stirred up by the clergy, and other persons of some influence in the neighbourhood, almost as ignorant as the ruffians they employed to assault the preachers and their peaceable congregations, and the description of the mob at Ephesus, in the Acts of the Apostles, was as well suited to them as if they had been the original and not the copy. "Some cried one thing and some another, for the assembly was confused, and the most part knew not wherefore they were come together." They generally, however, agreed to pull down the preacher, and to abuse both him and his hearers, men, women, and even children.

Mr. Southey's observations on our band-meetings, and watch-nights, cannot be passed over. His censure of this part of our discipline, is not quite so gross as may be found in some other publications, (7)

(7) Mr. Polwhele has pretty largely dwelt upon these institutions, and charged us with gross and shameful immoralities in their observance in his new edition of the "Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists considered, by Bishop Lavington; with notes, introduction, and

but they proceed from the same ignorance of our institutions which has misled others ; and on the

appendix," equal in bulk to the bishop's work, which he has just edited for the illumination of the year 1820. This gentleman has recovered, it should seem, the effect of the detection of the falsehoods contained in his "*Anecdotes of Methodism*," published a few years ago, and again stalks forth, under pretence of zeal for the church, with falsehoods as gross, and with a countenance as unabashed. Like the ram in Daniel's vision, he pushes "westward, northward, and southward," in almost every direction, against Bible Societies, the education of the poor, the evangelical clergy in the church, and above all, against Methodism, whether Arminian or Calvinistic. Mr. Polwhele has at length secured himself, I should conceive, against all reply ; for his violence and grossness have rendered reply unnecessary ; and no writer, I suppose, will be found so insensible of what he owes to himself as to stoop to him. His introduction, notes, appendix, &c. are in many parts, in fact, too loose and obscene, and often too nearly approach blasphemy itself, to be read by any of the decent part of society, except obliged to it by some public duty, though they are written by the *vicar of Manaccan and St. Anthony* ! Such a farrago of bigotry, blasphemy, buffoonery, indecency, and falsehood, has not for a long time disgraced the press, and affronted the common sense and feelings of all who profess the least respect to religion in the church or out of it. As a politician, Henry the Eighth is the great object of his admiration. As a churchman, Archbishop Laud. He is an enemy to much preaching, even in churches, for "it was a remarkable saying, founded on the reason of things, *that a preaching church cannot stand.*" To the evangelical clergy, he bears almost as great an enmity as to the sectaries. "Our own gospel preachers are really greater enemies to the church, than the most malign opposers of her." They are contemptuously called "*Gospellers*;" and as to those colleges, at Oxford and Cambridge, "that pay particular attention to the education of gospel ministers," he advises the heads of the universities "to watch over them," and "check the slightest tendency in their youth to evangelical irregularities." As to unevangelical irregularities he gives them no advice or caution, as being, I suppose, in his estimate, of little danger to the church. For those of the clergy who are zealously endeavouring the conversion of the Jews, he has the appellation "*Judaizing Gospellers*;" and for those who are promoting the conversion of pagans, "*Gentile Gospellers*;" and they seem equally offensive to him. Bible Societies come in also for a large share of his animadversion. He anticipates the highest degree

subject of bands and watch-nights, he has given some sanction to the wicked misrepresentations of writers less disposed than himself to truth.

of moral and civil danger from the circulation of the Scriptures amongst the poor ; and it is more than hinted, that by that means they are rendered “ ripe for every evil work.” The collection of Bible subscriptions among the *poor* is therefore “a nefarious business,” and the female agency employed by the Bible Society is “ degraded into an engine of fanaticism.” “ It is scarcely more degraded when we see it an instrument of rebellion.” Hunt’s female reformers, and the female collectors of Bible Associations, are therefore placed by him upon nearly the same level ! These female collectors “ go from house to house, leading captive silly women,” and penetrating the recesses of domestic repose ; they every week raise a commotion, or excite jealousy under one roof or another.” They extort “ family secrets” from servants ; and “ he *knows* servants who, to get Bible-money, he believes would not scruple to sell their masters’ goods.” To Bell’s schools he is scarcely charitable, and as for those of Lancaster he has not “ the slightest doubt, that their grand object is to puritanize and revolutionize the country.” After all these fulminations against evils in the church, we cannot expect him to be over gentle in his treatment of the evils out of it. Dissenters and Methodists are spectres which every where cross his path. He is greatly dissatisfied with the Toleration Act, and recommends some very important *improvements* in it. With the Methodists he thinks, like Jonah, he does well to be angry, and can give reasons more numerous and weighty for their suppression, than the moody prophet for the destruction of the Ninevites ; and if what he affirms were but true, as we could not have a more severe judge, we should not certainly deserve to have one less so. His authorities for his statements are chiefly two, and both are *equally* good. There is first, his honourable self, convicted of bearing false witness against his neighbours a few years ago, by Mr. Samuel Drew and others, who replied to his “ Anecdotes of Methodism.” The second authority is the author of a work on Methodism, very well known as to *character*; an author by profession, when former professions failed, or became *unsafe*; and who has lately sunk from a writer of octavos into the more rapid manufacture of the flying artillery of blasphemy and sedition, as writer in chief to the celebrated parodist publisher of Ludgate Hill, and is reputed to be the author of the political “ House that Jack built,” the “ Dainty Dish to set before a King,” the “ Matri-

Our band-meetings are small companies of serious persons, of the same sex, and in the same condition of life, whether married or single, who meet occa-

monial Ladder," &c. Such is the authority which Mr. Polwhele, a principal writer in the Anti-Jacobin Review, the man who is agonized at the dangers which threaten Church and State, fraternizes with, and holds up to confidence. "But misery gives a man strange bed-fellows," and the misery to which Methodism has reduced the "Vicar of Manaccan," has made him very careless in the choice of his companion. The most singular circumstance is, that our great Anti-Jacobin Reviewer has resorted to Mr. Hone's journeyman parodist and "dainty dish" provider, for a character of the learning and piety of the clergy of the Church of England, which he exhibits with no small triumph. Even the most rigid sectarian would scarcely humble the church to this.

But whilst the blind violence of Mr. Polwhele's attacks upon religion, and religious characters in the church and out of it, will excite pity, the filthy verses, entitled "The Saint's Progress," in the appendix to his edition of Lavington, must mingle pity with indignation. These are the means by which such *high* churchmen as Mr. Polwhele, make a *low* church: and low it is in the county of Cornwall; so low, that even if a Sectarist would not rejoice in the elevation of its character and influence in a county so populous, he might be justly suspected of loving his own party more than the common Christianity. But it will not be raised by calumnies and slanders; by intolerance and uncharitableness; by furious pamphlets, and railing visitation sermons. The Cornish people are distinguished for their strong sense. This is acknowledged by Mr. Polwhele, notwithstanding the heavy charges of fanaticism which he brings against them; and to the zeal, diligence, and affection of a clergy who "seek not theirs but them" they will not be insensible. Let Mr. Polwhele imitate some excellent examples among his brethren there. Let him cultivate the ornament of a meek and a quiet spirit; preach the doctrines of his own church, faithfully and affectionately; instruct the young, correct the vicious, comfort the sick and aged; let him rather weep over heresies, and errors, and wanderers, than exasperate them by a proud and censorious spirit; let him become "pure in heart," and then his lips and his pen, both of which need much lustration, will become pure also. In that case, his churches will not want attendants, nor their altars communicants; and if he shew as much diligence to spread this spirit through the county

sionally to converse with each other on their religious state, and to engage in mutual prayer. They are grounded upon the injunction of St. James, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." Whatever objection may be made to these meetings, as a formal part of discipline, (though with us they are only *recommended*, not enjoined) the principle of them is to be found in this passage of scripture. They have been compared to the auricular confession of the papists, but ignorantly enough, for the confession is in itself essentially different, and it is not made to a minister, but takes place among private Christians to each other, and is in fact, nothing more than a general declaration of the religious experience of the week. Nor is the abuse of the passage in St. James to the purpose of superstition, a reason sufficient for neglecting that friendly confession of faults by Christians to each other which may engage their prayers in each others behalf. The founders of the national church did not come to this sweeping conclusion, notwithstanding all their zeal against the confessions of the Romish Church. In the Homily on repentance, it is said, "we ought to confess our weakness and infirmities one to another, to the end,

among his brethren, as he has employed to make them persecutors, he will see the church rise, not upon the destruction of religious liberty, good neighbourhood, and evangelical sentiments, but upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets; a foundation, not to be laid by hard speeches, but by truth and love. Mr. Polwhele seems to have taken the celebrated South for his model, and in truth he has imitated him successfully in every thing, *but his wit and genius.* It is also but just to South to say, that as Mr. Polwhele never mounts so high, so South never sunk so low.

that knowing each other's frailness, we may the more earnestly pray together unto Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, that he will vouchsafe to pardon us our infirmities, for his Son Jesus Christ's sake." For the *principle* of this institution, Mr. Wesley might therefore plead the authority of the church of which he was a clergyman; and if the manner of carrying the principle into effect were free from sound objection, a formal institution for this purpose can no more be condemned than the principle itself. Mr. Southey, however, objects to our mode, because Mr. Wesley's rules enjoin an explicitness of mutual communication on the subject of religious experience which he thinks dangerous. Yet even Bishop Taylor not only enjoins the practice, but directs that it should be much more explicit than the rules drawn up for the bands by Mr. Wesley himself require.

" To the same purpose, it is of great use that he who would preserve his humility, should choose some spiritual person to whom he shall oblige himself to discover his very thoughts and fancies, every act of his, and all his intercourse with others, in which there may be danger; that by such an openness of spirit he may expose every blast of vain glory, every idle thought to be chastened and lessened by the rod of spiritual discipline; and he that shall find himself tied, to confess every proud thought, every vanity of his spirit, will also perceive that they must not dwell with him, nor find any kindness from him, &c."—*Holy Living*, chap. 2. sect. 4.

Mr. Wesley is not, therefore, without an authority, of great weight with Mr. Southey, for that institu-

tion; to the very principle of which he so much objects. But then, he remarks, "Mr. Wesley did not perceive the danger of leading his people into temptation by making them recur to every latent thought of evil, and compelling them to utter, with their lips, imaginations which might otherwise have been suppressed within their hearts for ever!" Mr. Southey, however, like some others, judging from the strong expressions of the band rules, has mistaken their intention. It was never intended, that the temptations, and evil thoughts of the mind, should be mentioned in their particularity and detail. This was never enjoined, never practised. The tale he has given of a silly woman, who fell into this error, is an individual case. This practice would not be sanctioned for the very reason he has stated, and which is indeed a sound one. It would injure and not improve the heart; and to the full length of Bishop Taylor's advice, we are therefore not disposed to go. It is a sufficient answer to all the fears which the author has expressed as to the effect of these meetings, that among the most eminently holy of our people are those, generally, who observe the bands. It is allowed that their benefits altogether depend upon the prudent use made of them; but they are not capable of the abuses which Mr. S. anticipates, for they are not at all to the taste of trifling and undecided persons. (8)

(8) Mr. Southey affirms that Mr. Charles Wesley "abominated the bands." Miss Wesley in some remarks on Mr. Southey's work, with which she has favoured me, observes on this passage, "I can bear my testimony, (corroborated by my mother) that my dear father always considered classes and bands essential to preserve order,

The injurious effects which Mr. Southey considers as necessarily following from watch-nights, are

strengthen Christian unity, and enable the leaders to inspect the conduct of their members. That he abominated *Bell's* presumption, and excluded those who joined *his* bands (so indeed did my uncle) is true; but as the passage stands it implies the bands in general."

From the same remarks, I have the liberty to insert the following passages, which correct other misrepresentations and mistakes.

" In another place, Mr. Southey writes, ' It may be suspected that Charles thought he had gone too far, when he saw the mischief, villainy, and folly, occasioned by Methodism, and that it had a tendency to separation from the Church.' My father no more thought that ' mischief, villainy, and folly' were occasioned by Methodism than by Christianity, which infidels affirm. He certainly regretted any tendency to separation from the Church; but he loved the Methodists to the last, did justice to their lives and principles, and always considered them as raised up to be auxiliaries to the Church, and *a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*' "

" My dear father is not treated with much more liberality than my uncle. Mr. Southey attributes the mutinies in Georgia to him; his words are, " In truth he had been the occasion by his injudicious zeal." Now, how is it possible to peruse the whole account, (which Mr. Southey must have read) the treatment he experienced from General Oglethorpe at the instigation of wicked people, and the refutation of this calumny by the open detection made before the General, and affirm such a thing? Mr. Southey omits to add, that the General acknowledged his error, and wishing to retain him, he proposed to build him a house, and offered him a deputy if he would return to the colony."

" Mr. Southey says that Mrs. Wright, (the wax-moulder) was niece to my aunt Wright—No such thing; she was born an American, and no way related; but it gives an opportunity of adding ' she sent treasonable intelligence to America during the war.'

" I wish to correct an error which Dr. Whitehead and Hampson have fallen into, from whom, Southey, I presume, has taken it, respecting my beloved aunt Hall, as it is not generally known to be so. Mr. Hall first courted her when she lived with her uncle, Matthew Wesley, in London; this was unknown at that time to the family; he then paid his addresses to Kezia, and when the match was fixed, he returned to Martha, whose affections he had won, and married her, against the expostulations of her brothers; but had not this been the fact, my good grandmother would have strenuously opposed it. I had this account from herself, and mentioned it to my

equally destitute of foundation. Very seldom more than once in the year, on the eve of the new year, are they kept till midnight; on other occasions, which are quarterly, they conclude at nine or ten o'clock. One cannot but smile at the anxiety expressed by Mr. Southey, and other writers, about our morality, when commenting on these meetings. Is it probable, that if a midnight meeting once in a year, had, after more than half a century of experience, been found productive of the terrible immoralities which some have charged upon us, whose assertions, like those of Mr. Polwhele, are made with great ease, that several hundred Christian ministers would have united to support them? Mr. Southey may lay aside his kind apprehensions. We know ourselves, and our people; and in a country where it is customary for persons, on the last night of the year, to sit up till the new year commences, and when that time is too often spent in a manner little suited to the condition of creatures to whom the lapse of so great a portion of their lives as a year is an event of great importance, we

father, who said, ‘ he knew she always justified herself from the circumstance of first love, but she ought not to have taken him.’ Kezia lived four years after, and it certainly was not for any thing she suffered on this account, that she died.”

“ Mr. Southey says, that my uncle as a husband, was not as submissive as Socrates, or as patient as the man of Uz.” Mr. Southey did not know him, or any of his family. My father (the most indulgent husband) used to say, that his brother’s patience towards his wife exceeded all bounds. The daughter of Mrs. Wesley was an indubitable witness of his forbearance, and bore her testimony of it—so did many who knew of the treatment which he bore without reproach or repining.”

A similar statement as to Mrs. Hall, I have received from Mr. Charles Wesley.

think it not only blameless, but edifying, to mark it by those religious exercises which may most forcibly impress it upon our own minds, that “we are strangers and pilgrims upon earth;” and lead the careless, as in a thousand instances they have done, to consider the great ends of life, and the solemnities of an approaching eternity.

The renewal of our covenant with God early in the new year, is another of our customs on which Mr. Southey has made some unbecoming reflections. I shall only refer him for a justification of the *principle* of this solemn act, to the Communion-service of the Church, where, every time the sacred ordinance is administered, the same act is performed: “and here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto thee,” &c. We do this in a more extended form of solemn dedication once a year, and that is all the difference. As to *signing* a covenant, this is not our practice; and for signing it with blood as stated by Southey, it may have been done by some individual enthusiast, though I never heard of an instance, and do not believe it.

Perhaps in this miscellaneous section it may be as properly noticed as elsewhere, that Mr. Southey has fallen into an error as to the settlement of our chapels. “Whenever a chapel was built, care was taken that it should be settled on the Methodist plan; that is, that the *property* should be vested, not in Trustees, but in Mr. Wesley, and the Conference.” Now, the *property* of chapels, when such a settlement takes place, is always vested in the Trustees; the *occupation of the pulpit* only being secured to the

preachers legally appointed by the Conference from year to year. The Conference has no more *property* in the best secured chapels, than in the Poet Laureat's butt of sack.

Mr. Southey is mistaken in representing it as one of the leading causes which led to the separation of Messrs. Wesley and Whitefield, that the former wished to obtain Whitefield's acquiescence in his favourite doctrine of Christian perfection ; a doctrine which, as so many better judges have mistaken Mr. Wesley's views, Mr. Southey may be excused for not understanding. When he shall have passed his noviciate in Christianity, he will come better prepared to pronounce judgment upon it. This, however, was not the leading cause of their difference. It lay much deeper. Whitefield became a champion for Calvinism ; and Mr. Wesley thought it his duty to oppose what appeared to him a dangerous error. This is made sufficiently clear by a letter of Mr. Whitefield's, from which Mr. Southey has given extracts in Vol. I. p. 381. They were not, however, separated in heart ; they went forth in different directions, but with the same object, to pour out the stream of living truth into every part of the land. Neither the one nor the other was successful in the conversion of men by the peculiarities in which they differed, but by preaching those great principles of the Gospel of Christ in which they cordially agreed.

Our Author charges Methodism with leading to "illiberal manners, and confined knowledge ;" and the pregnant proof which he deigns to give is, that Mr. Wesley "actually gave offence by printing

Prior's 'Henry and Emma' in his Magazine." Mr. Wesley was an extravagant admirer of the poetry of Prior, but he certainly never assumed to give the law to taste among his people; and if they differed from him as to the excellence and tendency of this poem, they might surely be allowed to do so without incurring Mr. Southey's censures, when Dr. Johnson himself, whose knowledge was not therefore suspected to be "confined," has called the poem "a dull and tedious dialogue, which excites neither esteem for the man, nor tenderness for the woman." After all, the objection was not to the reading of this nor any other of Prior's poems, nor of elegant and imaginative poetry in general; (we read some of Mr. Southey's, will he urge that as a proof of our confined knowledge and want of taste?) but to its insertion in a periodical work professedly religious, and I suppose that no religious magazine of the present day, would think a similar poem sufficiently accordant with its plan for insertion, whatever poetic excellence it might boast. The illiberal passage which follows in the next page, (Vol. II. p. 519,) merits also a slight notice. "In proportion as Methodism obtained ground among the educated classes, its direct effects were evil." Where is the proof? "It narrowed their views and feelings." In what way is not stated, and no answer can therefore be given,—"It burthened them with forms." This is also mere assumption; for the religious forms of Methodism were never very numerous, certainly not more so than those of the Church. "It restricted them from recreations which keep the *mind* in health." It is difficult to ascertain what recreations

are here meant which Mr. S. thinks so necessary to *mental* health. Perhaps the *theatre*, perhaps the excitement of *gambling*. If so, Methodism certainly prohibited them to its followers; but it was not peculiar in this. The most serious members of other bodies think with us, that they are fatal, and not conducive to the mind's health. But it did not prohibit cheerful converse, polite literature, and the pleasures of taste. "It discouraged, if it did not absolutely prohibit, accomplishments that give a grace to life." Here, too, is a want of explicitness. If Mr. Southey means the cultivation of amenity and courtesy of manners, general literature, the fine arts, music, and similar accomplishments, he was never more mistaken; if he means dancing, as I suspect, he is right, and I do not think we need an apology. "It separated them from general society."

—True, from the intimacies of indiscriminate society; but with general society they have ever mixed when any purpose of public usefulness was to be attained. This charge results from Mr. Southey's defective views of real religion. There is, in our Lord's words, "*a world*;" persons whose habits, if not immoral, are wholly earthly and trifling; and from an *intimacy* with that "*world*," every true Christian, by whatever name he is known, is called to separate himself, except when he mixes with it to enlighten its errors, and correct its morals. "It substituted a sectarian in the place of a catholic spirit." This is also a charge without foundation. It is granted, that through the infirmity of human nature, every religious body, the Church of England not excepted, is prone to a sectarian spirit. But if

Mr. Southey means, that the Methodists have been disposed by their system to undervalue the wise and good of other communities, there is nothing in his book which we shall so promptly and emphatically deny. We have not at least discovered this disposition as to pious and eminent members and ministers of the Church of England. "It alienated them from the national church." This has been abundantly replied to in the preceding pages. "It weakened the strongest cement of social order." If by this cement Mr. Southey means honesty, industry, loyalty to the sovereign, and obedience to the laws, the insinuation is false. His own book bears testimony to the contrary. If he mean any thing else we shall be obliged by an explanation of the charge, and also of the sentence which immediately follows,—"it loosened the ties whereby men are bound to their native land." Here I cannot even guess his meaning: he wished, I suppose, to round off the sentence. "It carried disunion and discord into private life, breaking up families and friendship." The author forgets to state how often it carried into families peace, and love, and order. Of this the instances were innumerable; and where it otherwise happened, what was the cause? Some branches of a family became seriously impressed; renounced the follies of life; frequented the house of prayer; and connected themselves with the people among whom they had been brought to a real acquaintance with religion. The consequence was, that in some cases "a man's enemies were those of his own household." Methodism thus, like primitive Christianity, became incidentally, and by the

bigotry, the worldliness, sometimes the wickedness, of other parts of the family, the source of disunion ; and Mr. Southey urges against us the precise objection which was made of old to Christianity itself. The cases are of the same class; the dispute was not with Methodism, so much as with the new and religious temper with which the gospel, heartily received, had imbued the opposed and persecuted parties. Did the blame in such cases lay with Methodism, or with that intolerance, and enmity to truth and piety, with which the members of some families opposed the others, on no other account than they had become “righteous overmuch,” and from whom in return they received nothing but kindness? True and serious Christianity, under any other form, would have produced precisely the same effect. The real reason of the opposition and ill will in such cases, may be found in the words of the apostle,—“They think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot.” But Mr. Southey attempts to confirm this representation by quoting a passage from one of Mr. Wesley’s sermons, which, though he does not at all understand, he thinks sufficient to warrant him in exclaiming, “what infinite domestic unhappiness must this abominable spirit have occasioned !” The passage is, as for “brothers and sisters, if they are of the world, you are under no obligation to be intimate with them, you may be civil and friendly at a distance.” But what does Mr. Wesley mean by not being *“intimate with them?”* Simply not in that degree as to partake of their spirit, and join in their sins. Mr. Southey, had he been disposed to

give a just interpretation to this passage, might have perceived this from comparing the different parts of the same sermon from which he has quoted it, for Mr. Wesley's advice there, as to the conduct of true Christians to men in general, can scarcely be supposed to be more liberal than that he would give in the case of our own relations. "We are 'to honour all men,' as redeemed by his blood, who 'tasted death for every man.' We are to bear them tender compassion—we are never willingly to grieve their spirits, or give them pain; but on the contrary, to give them all the pleasure we innocently can; seeing we are to 'please all men for their good.' We are never to aggravate their faults, but willingly allow all the good that is in them.—We ought to speak to them on all occasions in the most kind and obliging manner we can—we are to behave to them with all courtesy, showing them all the good we can without countenancing them in sin." "Let love be the constant temper of your soul. See that your heart be filled at all times, and on all occasions, with real, undissembled benevolence, not only to those who love *you*, but to every soul of man. Whenever you open your lips, let it be with love, and let there be on your tongue the law of kindness." Now such passages ought certainly to have been quoted before Mr. Southey had disclaimed against the "abominable spirit" of Methodism; and he ought to have shown how the above advices tended to "infinite family dissensions." He has also said in another place, that Methodism opposes but a feeble barrier against the breach of the fifth commandment, and has given another passage from Mr. Wesley in a perverted

sense in support of the charge. Let him read Mr. Wesley's sermon "On Obedience to Parents," and he may see reason to be more just in some future edition of his work, should it be called for.

In Vol. II. p. 531, we are told, that if the Methodists "had instituted societies to discharge such painful offices of humanity as the *Sœurs de la Charité* in France, the good which they might have effected would have been duly appreciated, and rewarded by public opinion." It so happens that such societies have been instituted. In every principal town we have a Society for the visiting and relieving the poor, and friendless, and sick; and great are the sums thus spent, as well as the number of visitors, male and female, who *seek out* the victims of poverty and disease, of every profession of religion, regarding only their necessities, in cellars, garrets, and other abodes of disease, contagion, and wretchedness, to minister to their wants. The good thus effected by their efforts has also, though Mr. Southey knows it not, been "duly appreciated by public opinion," as the large public collections for "The Stranger's Friend Society," and other charities, made in our chapels, sufficiently testify, as well as the liberal subscriptions and donations constantly received, and especially in London, from persons of all ranks, entirely unconnected with us, but who know the persevering zeal of the visitors, and that systematic management of these Societies which, whilst it effectually guards against imposition, reaches, by patient investigation, the cases of retiring and modest distress. This is another instance in proof of how little our author

knows of a people as to whom he utters opinions and censures so confident. The kind of Societies which he thinks would entitle us to public support actually exist.

§ 9. *Misrepresentations of Mr. Wesley's Character corrected.*

Some remarks on a few passages, in which Mr. Wesley's character is concerned, may properly close these strictures.

To Mr. Wesley's learning, and various and great talents, Mr. Southey is just; but an attack is made upon what he calls his "voracious credulity." "He accredited and repeated stories of apparitions, and witchcraft, and possession, so silly, as well as monstrous, that they might have nauseated the coarsest appetite for wonder; this too, when the belief on his part was purely gratuitous, and no motive can be assigned, except the pleasure of believing."

On the general question of supernatural appearances, it may be remarked, that Mr. Wesley might plead authorities for his faith as high, as numerous, and as learned, as any of our modern sceptics for their doubts. It is in modern times only that this species of infidelity has appeared, with the exception of the sophists of the atheistical sects in Greece and Rome, and the Sadducees among the Jews. The unbelief so common in the present day among free-thinkers, and half-thinkers, on such subjects, places itself therefore, with only these exceptions, in opposition to the belief of the learned and unlearned of every age and of every nation, polished,

semi-civilized, and savage, in every quarter of the globe. It does more ; it places itself in opposition to the Scriptures, from which all the criticism, bold, subtle, profane, or absurd, which has been resorted to, can never expunge either apparitions, possessions, or witchcrafts. (9) It opposes itself to testimony, which, if feeble and unsatisfactory in many instances, is such in others, that no man in any other case would refuse assent to it, or, so refusing, he would make himself the object of a just ridicule. That there have been many impostures is allowed ; that many have been deceived is certain ; and that all such accounts should be subjected to rigorous scrutiny before they can have any title to command our belief,

(9) Dr. Anthony Horneck has well observed, " If some few melancholy monks, or old women, had seen such ghosts and apparitions, we might then suspect, that what they pretended to have seen might be nothing but the effect of a disordered imagination ; but when the whole world, as it were, and men of all religions, men of all ages too, have been forced by strong evidences to acknowledge the truth of such occurrences, I know not what strength there can be in the argument drawn from the consent of nations, in things of a sublimer nature, if here it be of no efficacy. Men that have attempted to evade the places of Scripture, which speak of ghosts and witches, we see how they are forced to turn and wind the texts, and make in a manner noses of wax of them, and rather squeeze than gather the sense, as if the holy writers had spoke like sophisters, and not like men who made it their business to condescend to the capacity of the common people. Let a man put no force at all on those passages of Holy Writ, and then try what sense they are like to yield. It is strange to see, how some men have endeavoured to elude the story of the Witch of Endor, and, as far as I can judge, play more hocus-pocus tricks in the explication of that passage, than the Witch herself did in raising the deceased Samuel. To those straits is falsehood driven, while truth loves plain and undisguised expressions ; and error will seek out holes and labyrinths to hide itself, while truth plays above-board, and scorns the subterfuges of the sceptic interpreter."

ought to be insisted upon ; but even imposture and error pre-suppose a previous opinion in favour of what is pretended or mistaken ; and if but one account in twenty, or a hundred, stands upon credible evidence, and is corroborated by circumstances in which, from their nature, there could be no mistake, that is sufficient to disturb the quiet, and confound the systems, of the whole body of infidels. (1) Every age has its dangers. In former times, the danger lay in believing too much ; in our own, the propensity is to believe too little. (2) The only

(1) " And for as much as such coarse-grained philosophers as those *Hobbians* and *Spinosians*, and the rest of the rabble, slight religion and the Scriptures, because there is such express mention of spirits and angels in them, things that their dull souls are so inclinable to conceit to be impossible ; I look upon it as a special piece of Providence, that there are ever and anon such fresh examples of apparitions as may rub up and awaken their benumbed and lethargick minds into a suspicion at least, if not assurance, that there are other intelligent beings besides those that are clad in heavy earth or clay ; in this, I say, methinks the Divine Providence does plainly outwit the powers of the dark kingdom."—*Dr. Henry Moore.*

(2) " There are times in which men believe every thing ; in this wherein we now are, they believe nothing ; I think there is a mean to be chosen ; we may not believe every thing, but surely something ought to be believed. For this spirit of incredulity, and this character of a brave spirit, is good for nothing, and I have not as yet discovered the use thereof. 'Tis true, credulity hath destroyed religion, and introduced a thousand superstitions. For which reason I am content that men stand upon their guard, when any thing is debated and reported concerning wonderful and pious histories. The generality of those which are called honest men are come so far from thence, that they have cast themselves on the other extreme, and believe nothing. Nevertheless whither goes this, and what will be the issue of it ? 'Tis to deny Providence, 'tis to make ourselves believe God does not intermeddle in the affairs below, and to ruin all the principles of human faith, and by consequence to cast ourselves on a perfect scepticism, which is peradventure a disposition of mind the most dangerous to religion of any in the world. By doubting all matters of

ground which a Christian can safely take on these questions is, that the *à priori* arguments of philosophic unbelievers, as to the “*absurdity*” and “*impossibility*” of these things, go for nothing, since the Scriptures have settled the fact, that they have occurred, and have afforded not the least intimation that they should at any time cease to occur. Such supernatural visitations are, therefore, possible ; and when they are reported ought to be carefully examined,

fact which have any appearance of extraordinary, they tell us they have no intention to extend it any farther than the history of the world. But we don’t perceive, that we insensibly entertain a habit of doubting, which extends itself to every thing. There is a God ; we all consent thereto. There is a Providence ; we all profess and avow it. Nothing comes to pass without him. Is it possible, that God should so hide himself behind his creatures, and under the veil of second causes, that he should never at any time, though never so little, draw aside the curtain ? If we have taken the resolution to deny the truth of all extraordinary matters of fact, what shall we do with history, both sacred and profane ? He must have a hardness and an impudence that I understand not, that can put all historians in one rank, and range them all together as forgers of lies. I admire the argument of those writers, which lived two or three thousand years from one another, who nevertheless have all conspired to deceive us, according to our moderns, and there are neither sorcerers, nor magicians, nor possessions, nor apparitions of demons, nor any thing like it. ‘Tis much that these gentlemen have not pushed on their confidence, even to deny the truth of matters of fact contained in the Scriptures, which would be very convenient for them. In the times that the sacred writers writ their books, there were all these things ; and where do we find, that they ought to cease, and that a time was to come, in which devils should no more deceive men, and in which the heavens should speak no more in prodigies ? Because historians have not been infallible, must we believe they have been all liars, and in all things?—Let us conclude, therefore, that the credulity of our ancestors hath caused many mischievous tales to be received as faithful histories ; but also that it hath been the cause, that very faithful histories do at this day pass for false tales.”—*Jurieu’s Pastoral Letters.*

and neither too hastily admitted, nor too promptly rejected. An acute and excellent philosopher of modern times has come to the same conclusion. “Although Δεισιδαιμονικ, or a fear of spirits, hath been abused by vain or weak people, and carried to extremes, perhaps by crafty and designing men, the most rigorous philosophy will not justify its being entirely rejected. That subordinate beings are never permitted or commissioned to be the ministers of the will of God, is a hard point to be proved.”(3)

Mr. Wesley’s belief in these visitations is, therefore, generally considered, no proof of a *peculiar* credulousness of mind. On this he thought with all, except the ancient Atheists and Sadducees, modern infidels, and a few others, who, whilst in this point they agree with infidels, most inconsistently profess faith in the revelations of the Scriptures. Mr. Southey himself cannot attack Mr. Wesley on the general principle, since he gives credit to the account of the disturbances at Epworth, as preternaturally produced, and thinks that *some* dreams are the results of more than natural agency.

How then does the author prove the “voracity and extravagance” of Mr. Wesley’s credulity? Mr. Southey believes in *one* ghost story; Mr. Wesley might believe in twenty, or a hundred. Mr. Southey believes in a few preternatural dreams, say some four or five; Mr. Wesley may have believed in twice the number. This however proves nothing; for credulity is not to be measured by the *number* of state-

(3) Mr. Andrew Baxter’s Essay on the Philosophy of Dreaming, in the “*Inquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul.*”

ments which a person believes, but by the evidence on which he believes them. To have made out his case, Mr. Southey should have shown that the stories which he presumes Mr. Wesley to have credited, stood on insufficient testimony. He has not touched this point; but he deems them "silly and monstrous;" that is, he judges of them *a priori*, and thus reaches his conclusion. He did not however reflect, that his own faith in ghosts and dreams, as far as it goes, will be deemed as silly and monstrous by all his brother philosophers, as the faith which goes beyond it. Their reasoning concludes as fully against what he credits, as against what Mr. Wesley credited; and on the same ground, a mere opinion of what is reasonable and fitting, they have the right to turn his censures against himself, and to conclude his credulity "voracious," and his mind disposed to superstition. As to the accounts of apparitions inserted by Mr. Wesley in his Magazine, Mr. Southey thinks that he had no motive to believe and insert them, except the mere pleasure of believing. I can furnish him with several other motives, which I doubt not influenced their publication. The first was to collect remarkable accounts of such facts, and to offer them to the judgment of the world. It is assumed by Mr. Southey, that Mr. Wesley believed every account he published. This is not true. He frequently remarks, that he gives no opinion, or that "he knows not what to make of the account," or that "he leaves every one to form his own judgment concerning it." He met with those relations in reading, or received them from persons deemed by him credible, and he put them on record

as facts reported to have happened. Now as to an unbeliever, I know not what sound objection he can make to that being recorded which has commanded the faith of others. As a part of the history of human opinions, such accounts are curious, and have their use. But if Mr. Wesley's readers were believers in such prodigies, it was surely not uninteresting to them to know what had been related. It neither followed, that the editor of the work believed every account, nor that his readers should consider it true because it was printed. It was for them to judge of the evidence on which the relation stood. I should make a very large deduction from the stories of this kind which might be brought together; but I should feel much obliged to any one to form such a collection, that I might be able to judge of them for myself. Many of these accounts, however, Mr. Wesley did credit, because he thought that they stood on credible testimony; and he published them for that very purpose, for which he believed they were permitted to occur,—to confirm the faith of men in an invisible state, and the immortality of the soul. These, then, were Mr. Wesley's motives for inserting such accounts in his Magazine; and to the censure which Mr. Southey has passed upon him on this account, I shall oppose, at least the *equally* weighty authority of the learned *Dr. Henry More*, in his letter to *Glanville*, the author of "*Sadducismus Triumphantus.*" "Wherefore let the small philosophic *Sir Toplings* of this present age deride as much as they will, those that lay out their pains in committing to writing certain well-attested stories of apparitions do real service to true religion and

sound philosophy; and they most effectually contribute to the confounding of infidelity and atheism, even in the judgment of the Atheists themselves, who are as much afraid of the truth of these stories as an *ape* is of a whip, and therefore force theniselves with might and main to disbelieve them, by reason of the dreadful consequence of them, as to themselves." It is sensibly observed by *Jortin*, in his remarks on the diabolical possessions in the age of our Lord, that "one reason for which Divine Providence should suffer evil spirits to exert their malignant powers at that time, might be to give a check to Sadducism among the Jews, and Atheism among the Gentiles, and to remove in some measure these two great impediments to the reception of the Gospel." For *moral uses*, supernatural visitations have doubtless been allowed in subsequent ages; and he who believes in them, only spreads their moral the farther by giving them publicity. Before such a person can be fairly censured, the ground of his faith ought to be disproved, for he only acts consistently. This task would, however, prove one of the most difficult which Mr. Southey has yet undertaken.(4)

(4) As a decided proof of Mr. Wesley's "*voracious credulity*," Mr. Southey quotes a case from his Journal, in the following terms. "But he was sometimes *imposed* upon, by relations which were worthy to have figured in the *Acta Sanctorum*. One of his preachers *pretended* to go through the whole service of the meeting in his sleep, exhorting, singing, preaching, &c. and *affecting*, in the morning, to know nothing of what he had done during the night. And Wesley could believe this, and ask on what principles of philosophy it was to be explained!" And why does not Mr. Southey believe this? It is too absurd to be believed. A short method of dispatching a case,

But the greatest “credulity,” even if proved, only implicates the judgment on some favourite subject; I pass on, therefore, to some of those heavier charges which Mr. Southey, with a contempt not very becoming, has hurled at the religious character of the founder of Methodism. I shall not show myself so ignorant of human nature, even in its “best estate,” as to contend that Mr. Wesley was without imper-

but is it a philosophic one? If Mr. Southey had never heard of persons *walking* in sleep, and performing the regular business of life, thereby discovering a continuous and correct perception of place and circumstances, a fact confirmed by numerous examples, this phenomenon too, equally puzzling to philosophy, would have been referred to the “Acta Sanctorum.” But is there any thing in *sleep-talking*, in itself more incredible, than in *sleep-walking*? In a regular discourse pronounced in sleep, which supposes a connected train of thought, than in performing a regular course of actions, which also implies, *besides* such a connection of the thoughts, a mysterious, and often an exact perception of an outward scene, though in sleep? Yet in this superficial and dogmatical way of determining a subject, does Mr. Southey pronounce the “preacher” an impostor. That preacher was Mr. Catlow, which is every thing necessary to be said to those who knew him to rebut Mr. Southey’s calumny, and to defend Mr. Wesley, in this instance, at least, from the charge of a “voracious credulity.” He separated from Mr. Wesley from a difference of opinion; but his plain, strait-forward integrity was such, that he was usually designated by Mr. Wesley, after his separation, “honest Jonathan Catlow.” The Rev. Jonathan Edmondson, of Birmingham, a most respectable man, a nephew of Mr. Catlow’s, has recently informed me, that this peculiarity of his relative was well known in the family; and if Mr. Southey wishes more information on the case, I refer him also to Mr. Catlow, his son, formerly Master of an Academy at Mansfield, in Nottinghamshire, and who may be known either by Mr. Southey, or by his *quondam* friends, as an *Unitarian* minister. If Mr. Southey has no better proofs of Mr. Wesley’s credulity to offer, he must go a second time over the Magazine and Journals in quest of other instances. Let him, however, be careful to ascertain the character of every person who may be mentioned before he holds them up as pretenders and impostors.

fections. This, however, is certain, that Mr. Southey has not found them out, whether they were many or few. Perhaps he thought, that as every man must have some failing, it became him to make out a few cases against Mr. Wesley; and as direct evidence was wanting, to supply the lack of it by opinion and inference. I confess, however, that I see as little philosophy as piety in detraction, either as to the dead or living, however it may be hidden under the authority of "wise saws and modern instances." Mankind are much more interested in knowing how much excellence of character is attainable by the grace of God, than how much it may be deteriorated and flawed. One prompts them to emulation, the other covers and palliates their vices; and it is therefore very strongly to be suspected, that where a disposition to detract from the merit of exalted characters exists, and laborious attempts are made, when no vices fairly present themselves, to convert virtues themselves into vices, there is always in the calumniating party a consciousness of his own defects, and a disposition to indulge rather than to correct them. That this charge of detraction lies against Mr. Southey, has manifest proof. He admits, it is true, that Mr. Wesley's character had great excellence, so much so indeed, as to make the subsequent detraction the more wilful and disingenuous. Mr. Wesley exerted his powers in the service of that God, "whom, undoubtedly, he loved with all his heart, and all his soul, and all his strength:"—"his object was to give a new impulse to the Church of England, to

awaken its dormant zeal—to become the author of a national reformation ;”—he saw the good effects of his ministry, “ they were public and undeniable, and looking forward in exultant faith, he hoped that the leaven would not cease to work till it had leavened the whole mass.” “ He was too wise a man to be obstinate, and too sincere in all his actions to feel any reluctance at acknowledging that he had been mistaken—he was a man of great views, great energy, and great virtues.” This, and much more of the same kind, is said by the biographer in favour of Mr. Wesley; yet, this same man, who “ loved the Lord his God with all his heart,”—who devoted himself to these sacred objects, and from motives as sacred,—the man of “ great virtues,”—so “ sincere” too, in all his actions,—was the slave of popularity, ambition, and selfishness. His spirit was neither humble, nor his heart quiet, nor his judgment correct. “ By becoming an itinerant, he acquired general notoriety, which gratified his ambition”—“ the love of power was the ruling passion of his mind”—“ no conqueror or poet was ever more ambitious than John Wesley”—“ he could not hold a secondary place”—“ his object was to be the head of a sect.” Now, either Mr. Southey’s skill in character-painting has been greatly over-rated, or he has wilfully erred on one side or the other. Nothing is so impossible in nature, as the union of those qualities which he has infused into the character of Mr. Wesley; and the combination, in a literary or a moral view, is so monstrous, as to become ridiculous. If Mr. Southey’s poetical characters had been as extravagant, his

poems would have been below criticism. He knows well the caution of his master—

“ *Humano capiti cervicem pictor equinam
Jungere si velit, et varias inducere plumas,
Undique collatis membris, ut turpiter atrum
Desinat in piscem mulier formosa superne ;
Spectatum admissi risum teneatis amici ?* ”

Mr. Southey has, however, both taste and judgment in poetry ; and if, in drawing a character of real life, he has fallen into these monstrosities, it is to be traced to causes which rendered him as incapable of laying down the geography of the moon, as of giving the moral portraiture of Wesley.

These causes are, the influence of prejudice, and a total inability to estimate *religious* character, because he himself is practically unacquainted with religion. Both causes have operated ; but in what proportions it is difficult, and not necessary, to determine. What I shall rather undertake is, to show, in few words, that he has not adduced a single fact to support the censures he has pronounced. What he has said in praise of the founder of Methodism may be safely left for confirmation to a hallowed, an useful, and a long-tried life, (for few men were so long in the public eye,) and to the effect produced by labours, never exceeded since the days of the apostles.

I will take the chief instances of censure in which Mr. Southey has indulged, and examine the evidence on which they rest.

In vol. I. page 244, Mr. Wesley is charged with spiritual pride, and the proof is, that he thought the words of the prophet, “ The Spirit of

the Lord is upon me, because he hath sent me to preach the gospel to the poor," &c. fulfilled in *every* true minister of Christ! Did Mr. Southey forget that his church very rightly considers all *true* ministers to be "moved by the Holy Ghost?" "By becoming an itinerant, and preaching in the fields, Wesley acquired general notoriety, which gratified his *ambition*," page 398. Immediately after, he gives Mr. Wesley's own reasons for this procedure, in answer to an objection, "What need is there of thus preaching in fields and streets? Are there not churches enough to preach in?" His answer is, multitudes "never come to church. Will you say, then, it is their own fault. I grant it is their own fault, and so it was my fault and yours when we went astray like sheep that were lost, yet the Saviour of souls sought after us. And oughtest not thou to have compassion on thy fellow-servants, as he had pity on thee?" Now, here are two opposite motives for an action; one good, and quite in the spirit of true Christianity, and of the general, and even the *allowed* character of the man; the other, a supposeable one in the mind of Mr. Southey, and bad enough: yet the latter is most candidly preferred, without even pretending to adduce the least evidenee to support it!

"The love of power was the ruling passion in his mind," Vol. II. p. 197. The reason given for this sentiment is, that Mr. Wesley never devolved his power over his Societies upon others. Why should he? He could not have shared his power among many, without drawing up a formal constitution of church-government for his Societies, which would have amounted to a formal separation from the

church ; it would have been an insane action had he devolved it upon *one*, and placed himself, and the work he had effected, under the management of any individual to whom his Societies could not stand in the same filial relation as to himself. Here, then, is no proof of excessive love of power. Power he had, but it was not acquired by artifice, it arose from his being the father and founder of the Societies united to him. Power was never used by any man with more mildness and integrity. This itself is an answer to the charge, that the love of power was his ruling passion ; for the same unhallowed disposition which leads a man to love power for its own sake, always impels him to make a display of it for the gratification of his vanity. Mr. Southey is not a very eminent moralist, or he would have considered that a "*ruling passion*" for power is one of the greatest vices of the human heart, and that it bears down every virtue which stands in the way of its gratification. The simple love of power is not in itself a vice ; but when it becomes a "*ruling passion*," it is proposed as an *end*, to which every thing else is made a means. If power be sought, or if, obtained without artifice, it be held fast, as the *means* of usefulness, and of benefiting mankind, this neither argues infirmity nor vice. As a *means* of doing good, Mr. Wesley held the power which had naturally, and without any effort on his part, devolved upon him ; that it was not "*his ruling passion*," is demonstrated by this, that he sacrificed no principles of his own, no interest of others, for its gratification. His biographer cannot produce an instance, he does not attempt it, and yet, again indulges in gratuitous slander.

"He exacted obedience from his followers, (meaning his preachers,) as rigidly as the founder of a monastic order," page 204. The inference from this would be, that he maintained a rigid authority. This is far from the truth. No man was ever more obediently served ; but it was because no man was ever more loved ; and because the confidence in his uprightness was unbounded. Reason, and gentleness, and truth, were the instruments by which he so successfully conducted his plans. (5)

(5) In the Monthly Magazine for October, an attack is made both upon Mr. Southey and Mr. Wesley, by Mr. Evans, the author, I believe, of a book on the various denominations into which the Christian world is divided, and one of our modern *liberal*s, I presume, both in religion and politics. He complains, that Mr. Southey has traduced the memory of his ancestor, Dr. Caleb Evans of Bristol, "without mercy." In what this unmerciful treatment of Dr. Caleb Evans consists, it is, however, difficult to point out, except that Mr. Southey thinks that Mr. Wesley and Mr. Fletcher had the better of him in the controversy as to the American war ; and that Dr. Evans's principles are represented, in the extracts from Mr. Fletcher, to be mischievous and revolutionary. Mr. Evans, like most of the same *liberal* school, has little patience, when his favourite principles are controverted. Liberty, it should seem, is all for themselves ; and, as, of course, none can *honestly* differ from them, all opposition must be the result of some sinister principle. Mr. Sonthey must not "give the palm" to Messrs. Wesley and Fletcher, against Dr. Caleb Evans, for that is to " traduce his memory ;" and yet Mr. Evans ventures to traduce the memory both of Dr. Johnson and Mr. Wesley.

The former had a pension ; *therefore* the part he took in the political questions of the day, was insincere, and dishonest. Such is Mr. Evans's logic—I hope he teaches a method of reasoning somewhat more correct in his Academy. The present generation have, I believe, generally made up their opinion as to the integrity of Dr. Johnson. It puts little honour upon the head or the heart of any man in this day, however it might be excused in living controversy, to deal out such insinuations as Mr. Evans has comprised within the space of a few lines, against the great moralist of our country. It would scarcely be admitted in any periodical work, but the Monthly Magazine,

"No conqueror or poet was ever more ambitious," page 304. The context shows, that the term am-

in which few persons would suffer their names to appear as correspondents, who are very tender of their character, either as believers in revelation, or as good subjects.

Dr. Johnson had a pension, but Mr. Wesley had none, and sought none. Well, how then is it to be proved, that he could not be honest in his writings on the American question. Some bad motive must have existed; this follows from the axiom of the liberal school in politics, that all anti-revolutionists are imbecile in judgment, or corrupt in heart, or both. As the proof of bad intention is not, in the case of Mr. Wesley, direct, for he had neither place nor pension, it must be made out by another process. He changed his opinions, and he was guilty of falsehood. This is the slur, and the reader is left to complete the inference himself. But in what sense did Mr. Wesley change his opinions? Mr. Southey had stated that he was once favourably disposed to the American cause; but, before it had developed itself, as standing on principles which he conceived to be dangerous and revolutionary. That he was at first inclined to the Americans, is, in proof that one who had no interest to serve, was sincere in altering his opinion when the question was more fully opened; and, especially when he saw that cause defended at home, on principles decidedly hostile to monarchy. Mr. Wesley never changed his leading political principles. Had he done that, there would have been room for the charge of inconsistency. Many persons of the best principles hailed the dawn of the revolution in France, who speedily became its opponents. Others have gone on, advocating it through all its stages, like the editor of the Monthly Magazine, who, in the same Number in which Mr. Evans registers his name, and so far gives it his sanction, speaks of the late death of the Duke of Dantzig, "one of the twelve marshals, who, under Napoleon, gloriously defended France against the machinations of the European despots." Now, I conceive, that neither class is to be charged with inconsistency. One applauded the French Revolution on good principles, and those good principles being soon offended, their admiration ceased; their principles remained the same. The other applauded it on bad principles; and as its development accorded with those principles, their zeal for it remained unabated. The principles of the men in this case also remained the same. This was precisely the difference between Mr. Wesley and Dr. Caleb Evans.

But Mr. Wesley, we are told, recommended a pamphlet written in favour of the Americans, to Mr. Pine, of Bristol, that he might insert

bition is used in its worst sense, but how is this proved? In another place, Mr. Southey says, his

passages from it in his paper, and which he first denied, when charged upon him, and afterwards acknowledged. Mr. Evans is surprised that none of his biographers have noticed this, and hints, that it was "*wise*" in them to pass it over. The reason, I believe was, either that they never heard of the fact, or thought it one of the misrepresentations or exaggerations of the not over-temperate controversialists of the day. That it was an exaggeration there is no more doubt than that Mr. Wesley was incapable of a wilful falsehood. There were two ways of accounting for it—the first, that a man of Mr. Wesley's engagements might easily forget that he had read and spoken well of a particular pamphlet—the other, that he denied the circumstance against his better knowledge, when, in point of fact, there was scarcely any end to be answered by doing so. The heated opponents of Mr. Wesley in that day adopted the less candid conclusion, and Mr. Evans remains sufficiently heated to retain it, and to tell the world that Mr. Wesley was capable of a wilful falsehood! Did he ask, "how many beside myself will believe this?"

But Mr. Fletcher called upon his ancestor, after the controversy, and this he would have his readers believe, was in the "*way of apology!*" Mr. Fletcher called on many of his Calvinian opponents, and in a very "*conciliatory*" way too, for he could not but be conciliatory to *persons*, however he opposed their opinions; yet, I believe none of them ever concluded that his visit was an apology for contending with what he thought their errors. I will venture to say, that Dr. Evans never came to this conclusion—this is the dream of his descendent. Mr. Fletcher could respect personal worth in those from whose principles he totally differed; Mr. Evans has yet to learn that lesson.

Perhaps this mean attack upon the moral character of Mr. Wesley, dictated chiefly by political hostility, might have been left to stifle itself in its own grossness, had not Mr. Evans himself argued from the *silence* of Mr. Wesley's Biographers, that they admitted the slander. Thus it was said, that we tacitly admitted the *falsehoods* in that infamous publication, Nightingale's "*Portraiture of Methodism*," because we thought it more disgraceful to meet such an author, than to bear his slanders. Does Mr. Evans intend to lay it down as a law, that individuals, or collective bodies, are to be supposed to plead guilty to the charges made by their enemies because there are libels below contempt, and authors above shame?

ambition was the ambition to do good. How are we to reconcile these opinions? When Mr. Southey differs from Mr. Wesley in assigning the motives by which the latter was influenced, we know which authority to prefer; but when Mr. Southey differs from Mr. Southey, we are at a loss, as far as authority goes. Will he have the goodness in another Edition to inform the world which side of the many contradictions his present work contains he would have embraced. He has yet done nothing to induce us to adopt the least favourable side. It is indeed mere trifling to speak of ambition in the case of Mr. Wesley in any but the best sense. "Wealth, it is acknowledged, was not his object; the only honour he met with was to be reproached and persecuted; and the power of which we have heard so much, was the power to manage the religious affairs of a despised and a poor people. What was there in this to tempt that low and corrupt ambition which Mr. Southey ascribes to him? I fear that ambitious clergymen may now be found in the Church: let then the question of Mr. Wesley's ambition be put to the proof. Will any of them come among us to seek its gratification? We will give them as many of the advantages for obtaining "notoriety" which Mr. Wesley possessed, as possible. They shall have enough of duty, long rides, and frequent walks, and fields and streets to preach in, and the darkest parts of the country, and the rudest of its people, and the hardest fare. In proportion too, as they imitate the zeal of the Wesleys, we will show them all honour and respect on our part, and they will not lack that reproach of which the world

is not much more parsimonious in the present day, than when the names of the Wesleys were cast out as evil. It will not fail to calumniate them whilst living, if they give it too much disturbance, and perhaps some future Poet Laureat may lay by his birth-day and coronation odes, to asperse them when dead. Will all this tempt their ambition? I suppose not. Neither in their day nor night dreams does Methodism ever occur to them as the road to honour; and yet if it opened to Mr. Wesley so fine a field for the gratification of his ambition, why should not their's press into the same course, in the hope of seizing the same prize? Have they learning? so had he: have they prospects in the church? so had he. Have they ambition? so, Mr. Southey tells us, had he. How then is it that he alone, of all the ambitious clergymen we ever heard or read of, was impelled by it into the course he adopted, and that none besides himself ever thought that field preaching and itinerancy opened the way to a distinction sufficient to allay the ambitious appetite of any "conqueror," or any "poet?" I leave the difficulty to be explained by him who has created it.

It is not enough that Mr. Wesley should be charged with "ambition," he must also be represented as stooping to mean and unworthy arts to gratify it. "Charles could forgive an injury; but never trusted one whom he had found treacherous. John could take men a second time to his confidence, after the grossest wrongs and the basest usage." How does his Biographer account for this? Most charitably! "*Perhaps* he regarded them as his instruments, and thought all other considerations

must give way to the interests of the spiritual dominion he had acquired." This is making him a fool for using *treacherous* men as his agents, when he might have had honest ones. But the fact is, that Methodism was not promoted by men of this description; it offered no field for their labour; and they were not, therefore, used as "his instruments." The solution of the case, in consequence, goes for nothing, except as it is a pregnant proof of the candour and fairness of a biographer, who grounds a charge which involves either a gross folly, or what is much worse, on a mere "*perhaps*." I might, with certainly as much reason, say, "Mr. Southey's book abounds in contradictory representations of Methodism and Mr. Wesley, *perhaps*, because he wished to make it sell, and therefore endeavoured to gratify the taste of the friends and enemies of both." But I will not resort to this solution of his palpable inconsistencies. I leave this method of determining the motives, and estimating the characters of men, to Mr. Southey. He indeed ought to have been little disposed to this kind of illiberality, who has spurned at it so indignantly in his own case; and the character of Mr. Wesley is at least as important to the world, as that of the Poet Laureat. But he has given a very exceptionable example both to his own living critics, and to his future biographers; and as he has informed the world that he expects to live in the literary history of his country, to those biographers he may be supposed to look with some anxiety. I have too much respect for his general character, for his *present* political sentiments, which I believe are very favourable to good order and loyalty,

without being inimical to constitutional liberty, and for his literary merits, to wish that with “the same measure he has meted” to Mr. Wesley, “it should be meted to him again;” but assuredly a Life of Southey, on the principles of the “Life of Wesley,” would not be favourable to his posthumous fame. Just enough of candour would be thrown into it to take off the appearance of illiberality and hostility, whilst the general impression would remain detractive ; a little praise would be used as the means of rendering censure more pointed, and what was wanting in fact, would be supplied by innuendo. In one respect, however, Mr. Southey would be placed in circumstances very different to Mr. Wesley. Both in politics and religion, he has gone round the compass. Mr. Wesley’s leading principles remained the same through life. He had never to make the *amende honorable* for opinions unfavourable either to good government, or to piety ; he never “denied the Lord that bought him ;” he never worked in the vocation of revolution and republicanism ; he never had to write down what he had endeavoured to write up. He published nothing on which he had to look back with regret, much less with shame ; or for which he had to plead, in future life, the apology of immature years and inexperience. No “*Wat Tyler*” of his, lurked in the recesses of a bookseller’s shop, to fill him with uneasy apprehensions lest it should be dragged out of its retreat to beard him in his loftier pretensions, and call up his indignation at the malice which could give it publicity. I do not say that Mr. Southey’s indignation at the treatment he received

in this case from his political adversaries was ill founded. He experienced no small measure of the indignity with which a party spirit imbues and debases little minds ; but still he was made, in riper years, to “ inherit the sins of his youth.” Such circumstances ought to have made him more modest and humble in tracing the spotless character of John Wesley ; a man who had no such errors or mischiefs to repent of ; whose life was a continuous effort to do good ; and from whose pen nothing ever fell but what tended to promote the peace, and to exalt the character of society. Mr. Southey ought, also, to have remembered the immense distance between such a character and himself, whether learning, or piety, or usefulness be resorted to for the test : between one whose greatest praise hereafter must be, that he contributed something to the amusement, and a *little* to the instruction of society, and the man who effected a moral revolution in the habits of thousands of his countrymen, and roused a slumbering church and nation to the concerns of religion ;—a difference as great as between the wax lights of a drawing-room, and the sun which rises upon “ the evil and the good.”

APPENDIX.

THE following are the Extracts referred to in the note under page 123, from "Historical Collections, relating to remarkable periods of the success of the Gospel, and eminent instruments employed in promoting it," compiled by Dr. Gillies, one of the Ministers of Glasgow, published in 1754. None of the accounts mentioned in the following extracts are given at full length. They occupy a large part of the work, to which the reader must, therefore, be referred. They are adduced to show, as stated in the note, that great and sudden revivals of religion have taken place at different periods, among Christians of different denominations, and that these extraordinary occurrences are not, as Mr. Southey has stated them, peculiar to Methodism. Their antiquated style will be no objection to the serious reader.

Of the great spread of true, as well as of nominal Protestantism, soon after the commencement of the Reformation, Dr. Gillies observes, Vol. I p. 126 ;---

"In that swift progress and conquest, which the truth then had in that great day of the gospel's triumph, and what interest it got in fixing those famous plantations of the Church through much of Germany, France, Switzerland, Holland, Denmark, the Low-Countries, with Britain and Ireland, in less than forty years; these things are observable. 1. How the truth of the gospel then came not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance, 1 Thess. i. 5; assurance of faith and understanding of the truth, and with that seal of the greatest enlargement of comfort; so as receiving of the word in much affliction was with joy in the Holy Ghost, ver. 6. 2. That in this blessed way of the reformed religion, now owned and professed, the Church did receive the Spirit, and an innumerable company in these last ages were sealed thereby, which is that undoubted seal and attestation from the Lord, of his own truth and doctrine, so expressly promised to his Church under the New Testament. 3. That this high spring-tide of the power and efficacy of the word, was after so sad and visible a restraint for many ages, while antichristian darkness had overspread the visible Church; and what of the Spirit was then known, was like a private seal to the hearts of the godly, in those times of sackcloth and latent condition in the wilderness; not in any such way, as a public confirmatory witness to the truth, and with evidence and demonstration of the Holy Ghost, before the world, as hath been now since the Reformation. After this blessed day once began to dawn, and the Lord did so visibly rend the heavens, and caused the mountains to flow at his presence, with so solemn a down-pouring of the Spirit following the gospel, as there could be no standing before it, but cities and nations were subjected to so marvellous a power, to the embracing of the truth. 4. That this great work of God was

not for a short time, but for many years. Wherever the truth came, it did most discernibly accompany the same, not only to affect and convince, by some transient flash upon the spirits of men, but to that solid and effectual change, as visibly transformed them into that blessed image of Christ, by the Spirit of holiness, so as it was given, both to believe, and suffer for his name."

" One great benefit the plague brought to the city (London) was, that it occasioned the silenced ministers more openly and laboriously to preach the gospel, to the exceeding comfort and profit of the people; inasmuch that to this day the freedom of preaching, which this occasioned, cannot, by the daily guards of soldiers, nor by the imprisonments of multitudes, be restrained.---The fear of death did so awaken both the preachers and the hearers, that preachers exceeded themselves in lively, fervent preaching, and the people crowded constantly to hear them; and all was done with so great seriousness, as that, through the blessing of God, abundance were converted from their carelessness, impenitency, and youthful lusts and vanities; and religion took that hold on the people's hearts, as could never afterwards be loosed.---Great were the impressions which the word made on many hearts, beyond the power of man to effect, and beyond what the people before ever felt, as some of them have declared.---A strange moving there was on the hearts of multitudes in the city; and I am perswased that many were brought over effectually unto a closure with Jesus Christ; whereof some died of the plague, with willingness and peace; others remain steadfast in God's ways unto this day, but convictions (I believe) many hundreds had, if not thousands, which I wish that none had stifled."---*Baxter's Life.*

" I must here instance a solemn and extraordinary out-pouring of the Spirit, about the year 1625, and afterwards, in the West of Scotland. This by the prophanie rabble of that time, was called the Stewarton sickness, for in that parish first, but after through much of that country, particularly at Irvine, under the ministry of Mr. Dickson, it was remarkable; where it can be said, (which divers ministers and Christians yet alive can witness,) that for a considerable time, few Sabbaths did pass away without some evidently converted, or some convincing proofs of the power of God accompanying his word; yea, that many were so taken by the heart, that, through terror, the Spirit in such a measure convincing them of sin, in hearing of the word, they have been made to fall over, and were carried out of the church; who after proved the most solid and lively Christians. And, as it was known, some of the most gross, who used to mock at religion, being engaged, upon the fame that went abroad of such things, to go to some of these parts where the gospel was then most lively, have been effectually reached before their return, with a visible change following the same. And truly this great spring-tide (as I may call it) of the gospel was not of a short

time, but for some years continuance ; yea, thus like a spreading moor-burn, the power of godliness did advance from one place to another, which put a marvellous lustre on these parts of the country, the savour whereof brought many from other parts of the land to see the truth of the same.—At Irvine, Mr. Dickson's ministry was singularly countenanced of God. Multitudes were convinced and converted ; and few that lived in his day were more honoured to be instruments of conversions, than he. People under exercise and soul concern, came from every place about Irvine, and attended upon his sermons, and the most eminent and serious Christians from all corners of the church, came and joined with him at his communions, which were, indeed, times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.—The famous Stewarton sickness was begun about the year 1630, and spread from house to house for many miles in the strath where Stewarton water runs, on both sides of it ; Satan, indeed, endeavoured to bring a reproach upon the serious persons, who were at this time under the convincing work of the Spirit, by running some, seemingly under serious concern, to excesses, both in time of sermon and in families. But the Lord enabled Mr. Dickson, and other ministers, who dealt with them, to act so prudent a part, as Satan's design was much disappointed, and solid, serious, practical religion flourished mightily in the West of Scotland about this time.—I must also mention that solemn communion at the Kirk of Shotts, June 20, 1630, at which time there was so convincing an appearance of God, and down-pouring of the Spirit, even in an extraordinary way, that did follow the ordinances, especially that sermon on the Monday, June 21, with a strange unusual motion on the hearers, who in a great multitude were there convinced, of divers ranks, that it was known, which I can speak on sure ground, near five hundred had at that time a discernible change wrought on them, of whom most proved lively Christians afterwards. It was the sowing of a seed through Clydesdale, so as many of the most eminent Christians in that country could date either their conversion, or some remarkable confirmation in their case, from that day."

" That was also a remarkable time, wherein the Lord did let forth much of his Spirit on his people, in the year 1638, when this nation did solemnly enter in covenant, which many yet alive at this day do know ; how the spirits of men were raised and wrought on by the word, the ordinances lively and longed after.—Must we not also say, since the land was engaged by covenant to the Lord in these late times, what a solemn out-letting of the Spirit hath been seen, a large harvest with much of the fruit of the gospel discernible, which we may say with a warrant, hath been proved by the bringing of souls to Christ, a part whereof are now in glory, and many yet alive who are a visible seal to this truth, of whom I am sure some will not lose the remembrance of these sweet refreshing times, which the land did enjoy for several years of the gospel, and of many solemn communions, where a large blessing, with much of the Spirit and power of God, was felt accompanying the ordinances ; if it were expedient to set down circumstances, I could here point at many such remarkable times and places which should clearly demonstrate this."—See the authorities in Gillies, vol. I. page 306—315.

The following is taken by Gillies from the Life of the Rev. Robert Blair. It relates to a revival of religion in the North of Ireland, in 1628.

" Mr. John Ridge, minister in Antrim, a judicious and gracious minister, perceiving many people, on both sides of the Six-mile-water awakened out of their security, and willing to take pains for their salvation, made an overture, that a monthly lecture might be set up at Antrim, and invited to bear burthen therein, Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Hamilton, and myself. We were glad of the motion, and hearkened to it at the very first, and came prepared to preach; in the summer-day four did preach, and when the day grew shorter, three. This monthly meeting, thus beginning first by this motion of Mr. Ridge, continued many years, and was a great help to spread religion through the whole of that country. Sir Hugh Clotterday was very hospitable to the ministers that came there to preach.—So mightily grew the word of God, and his gracious word prospered in the hands of his faithful servants, the power of man being restrained from opposing the work of God: and the Lord was pleased to protect our ministry by raising up friends to us, and giving us favour in the eyes of all the people about us. There were many converts in all our congregations. That blessed work of conversion was now spread beyond the bounds of Down and Antrim, to the skirts of neighbouring counties, whence many came to the monthly meetings, and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The Lord was pleased to bless his word, the people had a vehement appetite for it, that could not be satisfied: they hung upon the ministers, still desirous to have more; no day was long enough, no room large enough.—That solemn and great work of God may with propriety be said to have been one of the largest manifestations of the Spirit, and of the most solemn times of the down-pouring thereof, that almost since the days of the Apostles hath been seen; where the power of God did sensibly accompany the word with an unusual motion upon the hearers, and a very great success as to the conversion of souls to Christ. The goings of the Lord were then full of majesty, and the shout of a king was heard in the meetings of his people, that, as a judicious old Christian, who was there present, did express it, he thought it was like a dazzling beam and ray of God, with such an unusual brightness, as even forced by-standers to an astonishment. A very effectual door opened, with more than ordinary enlargement, which the ministers of Christ there found in the preaching of the word, whilst the people might be seen hearing the same in a melting frame, with much tenderness of spirit; surely this was the very power of God, a convincing seal to the truth and ministry of his servants, who were then persecuted; yea, a thing which, as it was known, had an awful impression, and was a terror to their adversaries.—Mr. Blair, in his Life, speaking of a conversation he had with Archbishop USHER, says, ' He was very affable and communicative; he desired to know of me what my mind was of the nature of justifying and saving faith. I told him my mind, that I held the accepting and receiving of Jesus Christ as he is offered in the gospel. With this he was well satisfied. Afterwards he said, *It would break my heart, if that successful ministry in the North were interrupted and marred. They think to cause me to stretch out my hand against you; but all the world shall never move me to do so.*' "

Pietism in Germany was another of those remarkable revivals of pure and undefiled religion, with which modern times have been favoured; and it bears, generally speaking, the same characters as the rest. It began about 100 years after Luther's reformation, in and about the University of Halle, and spread into many of the provinces and circles of Germany. It is called in the preface to *Pietas Hallensis*, "a seed of purer Christianity, gradually quickening and springing up in the midst of the Lutheran reformation. It was slandered and persecuted, but was carried on successively by many able and pious divines. Some excesses occasionally appeared, which were charged as usual upon the whole system. Pietism had, however, able defenders, and the benefits effected by it were, in 1688, drawn out under 62 heads, as answers to its adversaries." Some of these heads were as follows :—

" Private exercises of piety have been set up in several places, for mutual edification, and met with some encouragement and approbation from the magistrates. The education of youth has been more seriously laid to heart than formerly. A great many writings, treating upon the several heads of practical divinity, have been published for the increase of Christian life and knowledge. The article of justification, and its coherence with true sanctification, or holiness of life, hath been set in a clearer light than it formerly was. The common way of philosophizing has begun to lose its credit, and a philosophy more savouring of a Christian temper, and raised on more solid principles, set up again. The logical, metaphysical, and homiletical schools have been less frequented, and more time spent on the Bible and exegetical conferences of theology, to a visible improvement of divinity scholars. The wonted way of preaching, too much tied up to a fallacious and luxurious oratory, and fit for catching the applause of men, has been discountenanced, and a plainer method, derived from power and inward experience, begun to be encouraged.—The distinction between the essential and accessory points of religion has been revived, and the former more preached up than the latter. Likewise has the great distinction betwixt mere morality and true spiritual Christianity, been set up again. The idol of an heathenish morality has been turned out of some churches, and the pure Spirit, as the only restoring principle of fallen nature, suffered to come in again, for rightly framing a Christian's life and conversation. The greatest points of Christian religion, viz. of a living faith in Christ; likewise of regeneration, mortification, contrition, resignation, self-denial, imitation of Christ, and others of that nature, too slightly handled hitherto, have begun to appear again, and to be known among Christians.—The spirit of prayer has been revived in a more eminent degree. Many young people have united in prayers and thanksgiving.—The dying hours of some have been very edifying to the survivors.—People have been generally more inspired with a generous and enlarged care for the poor and indigent."

Accounts of various revivals of religion in different parts of the United States of America, before the visits of Mr. Whitefield to that country, may

be found in Vol. II. of the Historical Collections. The following are among the number.

The Rev. S. Dornforth, in a Letter, dated *Taunton, New England, February 20th, 1704-5*, says, "We are much encouraged by an unusual and amazing impression made by God's Spirit on all sorts among us, especially on the young men and women. It is almost incredible how many visit me with discoveries of the extreme distress of mind they are in about their spiritual condition. And the young men, instead of their merry meetings, are now forming themselves into regular meetings for prayer, and repetition of sermons, signing the same orders which I obtained some years ago a copy of from the young men's meeting in the North of Boston."

There was also a remarkable instance of the revival of religion in the year 1721, at Windham, in Connecticut colony.—Windham is a town of about some thirty years standing.—"Persons of all ages," says the Rev. Mr. Adams, "and some of whom there was but little expectation, have come together to seek the Lord their God; so that within the compass of about half a year, there have been four score persons joined to their communion, and more are still dropping in.—In the mean time, it is surprising to see what an happy alteration is made when God is pleased to bless the dispensation of the gospel, and the institutions of his house, and confirm his words in the mouths of his servants. Now, the eyes of the blind are opened, the ears of the deaf unstopped, the dumb are taught to speak, and they that were spiritually dead are raised unto life. To behold obstinate sinners who went forwardly in the ways of their own heart, yielding themselves unto God; such as were careless and unconcerned about their own souls, now brought to the last distress and concern about what they shall do to escape from the wrath that is to come; and such as were fond of their several vicious courses now quitting them with shame and indignation, that they may endeavour for the future to lead their lives, not 'according to the lusts of men, but the will of God. Shall it not from this time be said, what hath God wrought?'—Now, they that have happily 'escaped out of the snare of the fowler,' admire the wonders of free grace which remembered and 'visited them in their low estate,' they are brought forth into the light of life, and having their doubts and fears gradually dissipated, they go on rejoicing for the consolation. Their fellow Christians who were in Christ before them, receive them with open arms, and many thanksgivings are offered up unto the Lord. Now things put on the same face of gladness and delight, as once they did at Samaria, when Christ was preached with success, Acts vii. 8, 'And there was great joy in that city.'

There was a considerable revival in the end of 1730, and the three following years, at Freehold, in the province of New Jersey, under the ministry of Mr. John Tennant, and his brother William, who succeeded him. Of which take the following account, from a letter to the Rev. Mr. Price, of Boston.

October 9th, 1744.—"I desire to notice thankfully the late rich display of our glorious Emmanuel's grace, in subduing, by his word and Spirit, multitudes of sinners to himself.—The sorrows of the convinced were not all

alike, either in degree or in continuance. Some have not thought it possible for them to be saved if God would vindicate the honour of his justice : but these thoughts continued not long at a time, blessed be God. Others thought it was possible, but not very probable, because of their vileness.—The conviction of some has been instantaneous, by the Holy Spirit applying the law to the conscience, and discovering to the eye of the understanding, as it were, all their heart deceits very speedily ; by which they have been stabbed as with a sword. But the conviction of others has been in a more progressive way. They have had discovered to them one abomination after another in life ; and from thence were led to behold the fountain of all corruption in the heart ; and thus they were constrained to despair of life by the law, and consequently to flee to Jesus as the only door of hope, and so rest entirely on his merit for salvation.—After the aforesaid sorrowful exercises, such as were reconciled to God have been blessed with the Spirit of adoption, enabling them to cry, Abba, Father. But some have had greater degrees of consolation than others, in proportion to the clearness of the evidences of their sonship.—The Lord has brought some out of the horrible pit of darkness and distress, and brought them into the light of his countenance. He has filled their hearts with joy, and their mouths with praises ; yea, given them the full assurance of faith. Others have been brought to peace in believing ; but have not had so great a plerophory of joy : yet they go on in a religious course, trusting in the Lord.—In a word, the sapless formalist is become spiritual in his conversation ; the proud and haughty are made humble and affable ; the wanton and vile, sober and temperate ; the swearer honours that venerable Name he was so wont to profane, and blesses instead of cursing ; the sabbath-breaker is brought to be a strict observer of holy time ; the worldling now seeks treasures in the heavens ; the extortioner now deals justly ; and the formerly-malicious forgive injuries ; the prayerless are earnest and incessant in acts of devotion ; and the self-seeker endeavours the advancement of God's glory, and the salvation of immortal souls."

The next revival that followed that in Freehold, was that remarkable one in Northampton, 1734, &c. which we shall relate from the following passages of President Edwards's *Narrative*, in Prince's *Christian History*.

" Just after my grandfather's death, it seemed to be a time of extraordinary dulness in religion. Licentiousness for some years greatly prevailed among the youth of the town.—At the latter end of the year 1733, there appeared a very unusual flexibility, and yielding to advice, in our young people. It had been too long their manner to make the evening after the sabbath, and after our public lecture, to be especially the times of their mirth and company-keeping. But now a sermon was preached on the sabbath before the lecture, to show the evil tendency of the practice, and to persuade to reform it ; and it was urged on heads of families, that it should be a thing agreed upon among them to govern their families, to keep their children at home, at these times ; and withal it was more privately moved, that they should meet together the next day in their several neighbourhoods, to know each other's minds, which was accordingly done, and the motion complied with throughout the town. But parents found little or

no occasion for the exercise of government in the case ; the young people declared themselves convinced by what they had heard from the pulpit, and were willing of themselves to comply with the counsel that had been given ; and it was immediately, and, I suppose, universally complied with ; and there was a thorough reformation of these disorders thenceforward, which has continued ever since.

" Presently upon this, a great and earnest concern about the great things of religion, and the eternal world, became universal in all parts of the town, and among persons of all ages ; the noise among the dry bones waxed louder and louder : all other talk but about spiritual things was soon thrown by ; all the conversations in all companies, and upon all occasions, was upon these things only, unless so much as was necessary for people carrying on their ordinary secular business.—There was scarcely a single person in the town, either old or young, that was left unconcerned about the great things of the eternal world.—Those who were wont to be the vainest, and loosest, and those that had been most disposed to think and speak slightly of vital and experimental religion, were now generally subject to great awakenings. And the work of conversion was carried on in the most astonishing manner, and increased more and more ; souls did as it were come by flocks to Jesus Christ. From day to day, for many months together, might be seen evident instances of sinners brought out of darkness into marvellous light, and delivered out of an horrible pit, and from the miry clay, and set upon a rock, with a new song of praise to God in their mouths. This work of God, as it was carried on, and the number of true saints multiplied, soon made a glorious alteration in the town ; so that in the spring and summer following, in the year 1735, the town seemed to be full of the presence of God : it never was so full of love, nor so full of joy, and yet so full of distress, as it was then. There were remarkable tokens of God's presence in almost every house. It was a time of joy in families on the account of salvation being brought unto them ; parents rejoicing over their children as new born, and husbands over their wives, and wives over their husbands. The goings of God were then seen in his sanctuary ; God's day was a delight, and his tabernacles were amiable. Our public assemblies were then beautiful ; the congregation was alive in God's service, every one earnestly intent on the public worship, every hearer eager to drink in the words of the minister as they came from his mouth ; the assembly in general were, from time to time, in tears while the word was preached ; some weeping with sorrow and distress, others with joy and love, others with pity and concern for the souls of their neighbours.—When this work first appeared, and was so extraordinarily carried on amongst us in the winter, others round about us seemed not to know what to make of it ; and there were many that scoffed at and ridiculed it ; and some compared what we call conversion, to certain *distempers*. But it was very observable by many, that occasionally came amongst us from abroad, with disregardful hearts, that what they saw here cured them of such a temper of mind : strangers were generally surprized to find things so much beyond what they had heard, and were wont to tell others, that the state of the town could not be conceived of by those that had not seen it.—

In the month of March, the people in South-Hadley began to be seized with a deep concern about the things of religion, which very soon became universal : and the work of God has been very wonderful there ; not much, if any thing, short of what it has been here, in proportion to the bigness of the place. About the same time, it began to break out in the west part of Suffield, (where it has also been very great) and it soon spread into all parts of the town. It next appeared at Sunderland, and soon overspread the town ; and I believe was, for a season, not less remarkable than it was here. About the same time, it began to appear in a part of Deerfield, called Green-River ; and afterwards filled the town, and there has been a glorious work there. It began also to be manifest, in the south part of Hatfield, in a place called the Hill, and after that the whole town, in the second week in April, seemed to be seized, as it were at once, with concern about the things of religion ; and the work of God has been great there. There has been also a very general awakening at West-Springfield and Honey-meadow. Something of this work likewise appeared in the first precinct in Springfield, principally in the north and south extremes of the parish. And in Hadley Old Town, there gradually appeared so much of a work of God on souls, as at another time would have been thought worthy of much notice. For a short time there was also a very great and general concern, of the like nature, at Northfield.—This remarkable pouring out of the Spirit of God, which thus extended from one end of this country to the other, was not confined to it, but many places in Connecticut have partook of the same mercy. There has been a degree of the same work at a part of Guilford ; and very considerable at Mansfield, under the ministry of Mr. Eleazar Williams ; and an unusual religious concern at Tolland ; and something of it at Hebron and Bolton. There was also no small effusion of the Spirit of God in the north parish in Preston, in the eastern part of Connecticut, which I was informed of, and saw something of it, when I was the last autumn at the house, and in the congregation of Mr. Lora, the minister there, who, with Mr. Owen of Groton, came up hither in May the last year, on purpose to see the work of God here ; and, having heard various and contradictory accounts of it, were careful when they were here to inform and satisfy themselves ; and to that end particularly conversed with many of our people ; which they declared to be entirely to their satisfaction, and that the one half had not been told them, nor could be told them. Mr. Lora told me, that when he got home, he informed his congregation of what he had seen, and that they were greatly affected with it, and that it proved the beginning of the same work among them, which prevailed till there was a general awakening, and many instances of persons, who seemed to be remarkably converted.

" This seems to have been a very extraordinary dispensation of Providence : God has in many respects gone out of, and much beyond his usual and ordinary way. The work in this town, and some others about us, has been extraordinary on account of the universality of it, affecting all sorts, sober and vicious, high and low, rich and poor, wise and unwise ; it reached the most considerable families and persons, to all appearance, as much as others. In former stirrings of this nature, the bulk of the young people

have been greatly affected; but old men and little children have been so now. Many of the first have, of their own accord, formed themselves into religious societies, in different parts of the town: a loose careless person could scarcely find a companion in the whole neighbourhood; and if there was any one that seemed to remain careless and unconcerned, it would be spoken of as a strange thing.

"God also has seemed to go out of his usual way, in the quickness of his work, and the swift progress his Spirit has made in his operations on the hearts of many: it is wonderful that persons should be so suddenly, and yet so greatly changed: many have been taken from a loose and careless way of living, and seized with strong convictions of their guilt and misery, and in a very little time old things have passed away, and all things have become new with them. God's work has also appeared very extraordinary, in the degrees of the influences of his Spirit, both in the degree of saving light, and love, and joy, that many have experienced. It has also been very extraordinary in the extent of it, and its being so swiftly propagated from town to town. In former times of the pouring out of the Spirit of God on this town, though in some of them it was very remarkable, yet it reached no further than this town, the neighbouring towns all around continued unmoved.

"The work of God's Spirit seemed to be at its greatest height on this town, in the former part of the spring, in March and April; at which time God's work, in the conversion of souls, was carried on amongst us in so wonderful a manner, that so far as I, by looking back, can judge from the particular acquaintance I have had with souls in this work, it appears to me probable, to have been at the rate, at least, of four persons in a day, or near thirty in a week, take one with another, for five or six weeks together: when God in so remarkable a manner took the work into his own hands, there was as much done in a day or two, as at ordinary times, with all endeavours that men can use, and with such a blessing as we commonly have, is done in a year."

In Vol. II. page 455, Dr. Gillies has inserted letters from a minister in Holland, of the date of October 2, 1750, and January 15, 1751; of which the following are extracts:—

"I bless the Lord, I can give you the certain account of the plentiful out-pouring of the Holy Spirit in several congregations in the Velurve, one of the quarters of the duchy of Guelderland, by whose blessed and powerful influences that amiable kingdom, which consists in righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, is notably advanced. Of this great event, I had some confused notice before I went to ———, but thought it my duty to be silent about a matter of such vast importance till I obtained full and certain information, knowing well of what pernicious consequence, groundless precipitant reports are, in most cases, and especially of that nature. This information I have got since my return; and now desire to acknowledge and rejoice in this great work of God.—This blessed work begun in a town called Nieuwkerk, about ten English miles above Amersfoort, and

about as many from Harderwick, near the end of the Zenderzee; and from that town the blessed influence has spread over five different congregations in the villages of Putten, Barneveld, Lunteren, Nunspeet, and Zoest; in all of which, but especially in Putten, the awakening has been very great, and multitudes, according to the best judgment, brought under the blessed bond of the everlasting covenant.—There are two reformed ministers in the church of Nieuwkerk; the oldest is J. J. Roldanus; the other, who was called there in 1748, is called Gerardus Kuypers; the Lord has honoured them both to be instrumental in carrying on that blessed work. Mr. Kuypers gives the account of the work. It had been in this place a dead, barren, backsliding time for many years past; conviction and conversion work very rare: the place was full of infidelity, carnality, profanity, and fearlessness of God, to that degree, that it was by other places reproached, as being an habitation of people, who, by long prosperity, were waxed fat, and kicked against the Lord.—The small remnant of the godly who were in the place were daily persecuted with bitter scoffings and mockings.—The first means which the Lord was pleased to bless, for awakening that dead secure people to something of seriousness and concern about eternal things, was a public weekly catechizing, set up with this good design, that by this plain, simple, familiar way of instruction, that ignorant people might be brought to some distinct knowledge of the Lord.—This exercise was attended with notable success; many were stirred up to search the scriptures.—Another thing which the Lord remarkably countenanced, was the setting apart of some time for a kind of fellowship-meetings or Christian conferences, alternately, in the houses of the few among them who seemed to have any fear of God, and particularly on the evenings of the Lord's day.—These meetings were immediately much talked of; hundreds frequented them after their daily labour was over, (for that was the time pitched upon as the most convenient;) several were brought under the same concern about their souls, and began to see their miserable lost state, and were made to continue earnest in prayer.—All this was carried on with little noise, silently, as usual in the ordinary work of the conversion of particular persons.—In this way was ushered in that uncommon dispensation of the Spirit, which they looked not for; for, at last, the preaching of the gospel began to be attended with such awful power, that several were made to cry out aloud with many tears, under a bitter painful sense of their distress and misery.—The troubled and broken in heart were brought to Mr. Kuypers's house, who, upon conversing with them, soon discovered that the Holy Spirit, by the word, had begun a work of conviction in them. Mr. Kuypers finding things thus with them, began to conceive some hope; yet he stood astonished, conflicting with doubts and fears, to see so many persons so strangely affected.—His doubts and fears had this good effect; they made him very careful and circumspect in examining all these appearances, and comparing them with the Lord's word. The next day, there was an almost universal dejection and astonishment among the inhabitants of the town; Mr. Kuypers went early in the morning to the houses of such of the awakened and distressed as were best known to him; and the work being great, he got some private Christians to go to others; they were busy the

whole day, going to innumerable houses. From that day the work increased beyond description; there is no painting of it to the life; it was a perfect commentary upon the 2d chapter of the Acts. Mockers ridiculed, but multitudes were pricked at heart, and cried, What shall we do? Next Lord's day, the Lord graciously accompanied the sermons of both ministers with such demonstration of the Spirit and power, that many more were awakened.—The exercises of most were carried on with a considerable degree of quietness and sedateness, who, as far as we are allowed to judge, are savingly converted. But a great number were exercised with great bodily distress. As the awaked and distressed were many in number, several hundreds, so they were of all characters and ages.—Old persons of seventy and eighty years, who had spent all their days in ignorance of God, deep forgetfulness of him, and rebellion against him, have been at the eleventh hour snatched as brands out of the burning, and are melted into tears at the thought of the admirable patience of the Redeemer, to bear so many horrid provocations from them, and wait so long knocking at their hearts for entrance.—Many of the more knowing and learned in the speculative knowledge of Scripture truths, have been deeply and thoroughly convinced of their great blindness and ignorance.—The awakening went on so powerfully all the months of June and July, that several hundred strangers who came from other places were made to feel its influence, and pricked to the heart.—I can assure you that this blessed work still goes forward in that, and has spread through several other congregations, and eminently in the village of Putten, and that all the subjects of this blessed work continue steadfast in the faith and ways of the Lord.

“ By the account I have given, and the farther account I hope to give, if the state of my health permit, you will clearly perceive, that this work of grace wrought on the hearts of so many hundreds by the word and Spirit of the Lord, is, in substance, the very same work, which was some years ago carried on so remarkably in your happy corner of the Lord's vineyard, and agrees exactly, in all the great leading strokes and lineaments of it, with the work of grace, which has more or less been carried on in all ages of the Church of Christ from the beginning, though perhaps with some variety of circumstances, which must reasonably be expected whenever the Lord builds up Zion in a more observable and glorious manner, which he would have to be taken notice of by the world.

“ The great work of grace, of which I gave you some general account, not only goes forward at Nieuwkerk and the villages mentioned in my last, but, blessed be the God of all grace, it spreads itself through many other places unworthy that the God of glory should cast a look of mercy upon them, much more pour out his Spirit upon them, and make them savingly to know his word. The word of the Lord has free course, and is glorified in the conviction and conversion of great numbers at a village called Aalten in Gelderland; at a village called Rheid, in the dutchy of Juliers, and several other places through the country; and in the city of Groeningen (one of the seats of learning and philosophy) there has been a considerable awakening several months past, hundreds being under sharp convictions, which it is hoped will have a gracious saving issue. As to the work in general, the number of witnesses is so great,

their character for understanding, probity, and serious godliness, so unexceptionable, and the facts they attest such in their nature, as they could not mistake through ignorance, being what God's word plainly requires to pass upon every soul that would be saved, and what the awakened or comforted declare uniformly they have experienced; that no man can reasonably refuse his assent."

The following account, though to be found more at large in Gillies, I prefer taking from a late publication, "The Life of John Erskine, D. D. by Sir Henry Moncrief Welwood, Bart."

"In the following winter (1741-2,) very remarkable impressions of religion were observed in the congregation of Cambuslang, under the ministry of Mr. M'Culloch, the pastor of that parish—a man of genuine piety and considerable capacity, but who is said to have had nothing particularly striking either in the manner or substance of his preaching. His hearers, in considerable numbers, were on different occasions so violently agitated, while he preached on the Christian doctrine of regeneration, as to fall down, in the midst of the multitude, under visible paroxysms of bodily agony."

"To suit his labours to what he considered as important circumstances in the state of his parishioners, he thought himself bound in duty to add to the number of their religious exercises. He preached frequently on week days as well as on Sundays. He met with them often separately and together in his own house, to instruct, to admonish, and to console them, according to the best idea which he could form of their state of mind. The effect of his labours became every day more visible and extensive; and even they who were most disposed to question the soundness of his judgment on the subject, could scarcely refuse to give him credit for the purity of his intentions. The same visible agitation among the people was continued during the whole course of the winter, and his labours and solicitudes were never relaxed."

"Similar effects began to appear at Kilsyth, in the barony parish of Glasgow, and in some other adjacent parishes; and something less remarkable, but of the same kind, had been before observed at Edinburgh, and in other districts of Scotland, where Mr. Whitefield had preached. But nothing can be more certain, than that the unusual events at Cambuslang had been a subject of general observation and enquiry, for many months before Mr. Whitefield had ever been there; and it is not possible to identify their commencement with his labours, by any fair examination of the facts as they occurred."

"It was natural, however, to suppose that, after what he had heard, Mr. Whitefield would seize on the first occasion which offered to visit Mr. McCulloch. In the summer of 1742, he was more at Cambuslang, and in its immediate vicinity, than in any other district. He was there joined by a considerable number of ministers of the established church; by some whose curiosity was excited to examine the appearances which had attracted so much attention; and by others who were already convinced that they

were not common events, and were willing to give their help in what they believed to be the work of God."

" From this time, the multitudes who assembled were more numerous than they had ever been, or perhaps than any congregation which had ever before been assembled in Scotland; the religious impressions made on the people were apparently much greater, and more general; and the visible convulsive agitations which accompanied them exceeded every thing of the kind which had yet been observed."

" Whatever opinion we may form, either of the nature or of the source of those extraordinary effects, it is, at least, a most remarkable fact, that, in this period, they were neither confined to any one district or country, nor were exclusively connected with the ministry of any individuals."

" In Scotland, though they were more frequent and more remarkable in the crowds collected by Mr. Whitefield, than in any other congregations, they were observed, nearly at the same time, in situations remote from Cambuslang, under the stated ministrations of the parish ministers."

" The facts themselves, as they occurred in Scotland, whatever view may be taken of them, are ascertained by the most unquestionable evidence,—by the testimony of Mr. John MacLaurin of Glasgow, who was most assiduous and minute in his investigation of them,—by Dr. John Hamilton of the High Church of Glasgow, whose good sense and discernment were worthy of the high respectability of his character,—by Mr. Robe of Kilsyth, whose integrity was never questioned, and who published a narrative of the subject,—by Dr. Webster of Edinburgh, who accompanied Mr. Whitefield, and preached with him at Cambuslang; who published a defence of what he represented as real conversions there, in opposition to those who pronounced them a delusion; who wrote from his personal knowledge, and attested the facts of which he was an eye-witness,—and by Dr. Erskine himself, who was then a student in divinity; who wrote a pamphlet on the subject, entitled, "The Signs of the Times," which has furnished one of the chief reasons for introducing the subject into this narrative."

" The converts of Cambuslang and Kilsyth, could not prove their sincerity by their agitation; but it is equally clear, that their agitation could furnish no reasonable ground to suspect them of insincerity."

" It may, no doubt, be admitted, in perfect consistency with all this representation, that physical sympathy in a crowd might, sometimes, produce bodily convulsions, which had no connexion with any religious feeling. And this fact, as well as other circumstances alluded to, will account for such examples as occurred, of pretended converts at that time, who, afterwards contradicted their professions."

" But it must not be forgotten, that the number was very considerable of those who dated their first and best impressions of religion from this time, and who were afterwards distinguished by a visible and unquestionable reformation of manners, of which, few examples of the same extent can be produced in modern times. Even those who have done their utmost to decry the converts of Cambuslang, and to diminish their number, are obliged to admit, that they might amount to *some hundreds*; and others, who appear to have honestly related the facts from their own observations and

inquiries, and to have rejected every circumstance from their narratives, of which they did not think themselves fully assured, mention four hundred at Cambuslang, independent of those who belonged to Kilsyth."

" Whatever opinion may be held with regard to the means or influence, with which four hundred individuals connected a reformation in their moral and religious characters, which they afterwards supported through life; no fair man will deny, that such an effect, produced on such a number of human beings, is a subject neither of ridicule nor contempt. Many thousands attended, on whom no visible impression seems to have been made. And, this fact, according with ordinary experience, and honestly related in the narratives on the subject, confirms, instead of lessening their credibility."

" On the other hand, let the thousands who go away without having received any visible impression be out of the question, (though many good effects might have been produced, which were neither observed, nor related at the time,) four hundred individuals, who to the conviction of those who knew them, became better men,—men more useful and conscientious in their stations, and more faithful in their practical duties, than they ever were before, and who preserve this character while they live; exhibit a view of the religion of Cambuslang and Kilsyth, which a wise man will not bring himself easily to reprobate; and which no good man, if he candidly examines the facts, and believes them, will allow himself to despise."

" The examples published to establish this fact, it is impossible to mention here with any minuteness. It was observed, in particular, at Kilsyth, that before this period, the people of that parish had been remarkable for such a litigious spirit, as had in a great measure destroyed the comfort and confidence of private life; and that, immediately after this period, the spirit of litigation seemed to be so much extinguished by the spirit of religion, that the magistrate of the district declared, that for many months no action had been brought before his court, where it had before been usual to have a great many during the course of every week."

" Similar facts, equally decisive, were related from other districts; and, in general, it was certainly believed by those who had the best access to be thoroughly informed, and who lived many years in the habits of intimate communication with the individuals, that they who were called the converts of 1742, with few exceptions indeed, supported through life, the character they then assumed, and were equally distinguished by purity of manners, and Christian sincerity."





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